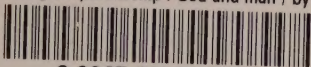


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THE GREAT PARTNERSHIP

JOHN ARCHIBALD MacCALLUM

THE GREAT PARTNERSHIP

God and Man

BY

JOHN ARCHIBALD MACCALLUM

Author of "Now I Know," etc.

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*This book is affectionately dedicated
to my first tutor and priest through
whose wise and delicate guidance I
learned in early childhood of God
and Duty and Destiny—*

MY MOTHER

PREFACE

This book is based upon and grows out of the conviction that man is of divine origin: he is the offspring of God. If this premiss is true, then it is certain that God must have a purpose in his children. It is beyond the reach of our minds to give a final explanation or even description of that purpose; but we are on safe ground in saying that the Father seeks to express himself through the achievements of those who share his life. The pressure of his Spirit is the dynamic that pushes them into action. Thus they are united with him in a joint enterprise that I have called *The Great Partnership*.

Man, however, can never meet his full responsibility unless and until he understands that he has infinite resources at his command. God is the senior partner who has furnished the capital, and he is always ready to have any of his fellow-laborers use whatever of his wealth they can to further their mutual interests. The wisdom of the ages, the beauties of the earth and sky, the inspirations of art and history, the joy of serving, the discoveries of science, and the laws of the universe—these and a thousand other gifts are for those who can use them.

The purpose of the following essays is to show that man lives in God and God in man. In them I make no attempt to be logical, neither in the order of my approach to the various aspects of the subject nor in the sense of offering definitions, because none can tell

where divinity leaves off and humanity begins. A complete interpretation of these two controlling ideas lies beyond our apprehension. God is in nature, history, and society, as well as in ourselves. In love, beauty, joy, faith, law, wisdom, and goodness, he presses into our lives and, as we reveal these qualities in character, we prove our kinship to him and our capacity to act as his agents. This explains how and why it is that in serving man we are serving God and thereby realizing our highest potentialities.

J. A. MACC.

Philadelphia (January, 1926).

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THE GREAT PARTNERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

I

Perhaps it would be unsafe to say that there is not as clearly defined a sense of God to-day as in some of the ages that are past. We can not be certain that we have the data that would justify such a conclusion. In estimating our own time we are always aware of its defects, while in surveying other ages there is a strong tendency to think only of their virtues. We sing of the "faith of our fathers," and generously ignore their truculence, querulousness, bigotry, and other limitations. Just as a remote landscape always appears more beautiful than that which is near at hand because its harsh outlines are softened by distance and the sordid wounds of industry are hidden behind a protective veil of dust, smoke, and mist, so time throws the illusion of romance over the character of former generations. Their courage, vigor, and resolution stand out majestically, while their sins and vices are reduced to minor proportions or sink entirely out of view. Men who have understanding of their times have always been aware of this superstition which has been strikingly exposed by Sir Thomas Browne:

It is the humor of many heads to extol the days of their forefathers, and declaim against the wickedness of times present. Which notwithstanding they cannot handsomely do, without the borrowed help and satire of times past; condemning the vices of their own times,

by the expressions of vices in times which they commend, which cannot but argue the community of vice in both. Horace, therefore, Juvenal, and Persius, were no prophets, although their lives did seem to indigitate and point at our times.¹

Doubtless it is true that in certain groups of men, and for certain limited periods there was a profounder realization of the presence of God than that which prevails to-day. This is illustrated in such a movement as Puritanism in the days of its greatest fervor, before it became denatured by cant, or in the rise of Methodism; but what counts in history is the sustained tendency. Here and there in pockets or small protected areas unusual levels of character have been reached; but the human race is a unit; the law of spiritual gravitation is always at work drawing the men of greater achievement toward the common level. For a few generations a spiritual aristocracy may flourish, but sooner or later the pull of the world will sterilize its self-perpetuating power. This does not mean that it has failed. On the contrary, there is a law of spiritual as well as of physical conservation. The great moral achievements and idealisms of the past have, in their decay, enriched the soil for succeeding generations. Egypt, Greece, Israel, and Rome live on in multitudes who scarcely know their names and have no sense of obligation toward them. As Browning makes the Bavarian priest, Abt Vogler, say:

There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall
live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;

¹ "Pseudodoxia Epidemica."

What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much
good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect
round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall
exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor
power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the
melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth
too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the
sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by and
by.

When these considerations are duly weighed, the conclusion is probably sound that with all its defects—its frivolity, sensuality, and spiritual illiteracy—our age is no further from God than any age in the past. But this is not a ground of satisfaction. On the contrary, if progress is not an illusion, we should be more sensitive than our ancestors to the divine presence. Ours is a greater reason than theirs, for they left us a vast legacy as the fruit of their sacrifices and courageous struggles against almost overwhelming odds. If fifty years of Europe are better than a cycle of Cathay, life in the twentieth century is immeasurably preferable to life in an earlier age—at least for those who are in a position to realize its richer possibilities.

Then too, our inheritance has been supplemented by science applied to every activity of life. Science has relieved us of many a pain which our forefathers had no choice but to endure; it has made easy many a hitherto slavish task; it has extended our leisure however we may misappropriate it; it has banished many of our diseases and given us a control of circumstance undreamed of in earlier ages. Theoretically it would seem that this enrichment of life should make its beneficiaries more alive to the source of their blessings; practically, however, it has not worked out that way. The sense of God is neither as deep nor as wide as our opportunities for spiritual achievement suggest and our spiritual health requires.

II

The greatest task with which the leaders of the Christian church are confronted is to stimulate in men the consciousness of God. Nor is this task confined to the leaders of the church; it rests upon all men of vision, for surely it is undeniable that a realization of the Eternal is an indispensable element in the highest character. What a transformation would be wrought in our social relations if all men were endued with a sense of the divine! How differently they would go about their work! What an increased feeling of responsibility would be theirs, giving them a new perspective so that they would liquidate their former interests and refund their assets! They would recognize many of their previous holdings as valueless—the pleasures and ambitions which hitherto had been dominant in their purposes—but they would see that every loss thus suffered can be recouped a hundred-fold by a realization

of the reality of God and the will to give him the first place in thought and action.

Why is it so difficult to believe in God; or at least to take him seriously? Job's plaintive cry, "O that I knew where I might find him," is still the cry of multitudes. Doubtless every man would like to believe, to feel that he is watched over and protected by a beneficent Creator who finds delight in his well-being, even though in other moods he should shrink from the all-seeing eye. Yet as I write, there lies upon my desk a current magazine in which there is an article by one of the most gifted of American men of letters. He confesses that he is so benumbed in spirit by the spectacle of life always feeding upon life, that he cannot accept the comfortable explanation which holds that there is a good and kindly purpose behind it all. The slaughter house, epidemic, accident, the death of the young and the promising, the universal cry of pain—these in their totality blot out from his vision any signs of friendliness in the universe.

Nor can it be denied that this attitude is representative of many intellectual leaders from the time of Hume, though Job had stated the problem ages before. Man's littleness against the blind forces of nature appalls him when he reflects upon the contrast. It is hard to reconcile the reign of law with an intelligent directing mind which discriminates in favor of the good as against the bad. The imagination staggers under the thought of the world's population, a billion and a half of individual souls, with those who went before them through countless centuries and those who will come after them. How is it possible to think of even the best of them living on forever in friendly relations toward one another in the heavenly commonwealth, or

of the great majority suffering together in a place of torment?

The magnitudes and distances of the stars also add their quota to the confusion of the man of modern education. Nor is it surprising that the discovery of the evolutionary process has aroused such intense and prolonged opposition by those who are governed by their emotions. After the biologist and philosopher have made their fullest and most eloquent plea and have been granted a favorable decision before the judgment-seat of Fact, none can deny that a glory has departed from man's estate. To be the specially created child of God gives a rank and station incompatible with animal relationships however plausibly explained.

III

This frank admission of the difficulties involved in a theistic interpretation of the world should not be discouraging. The man of intellectual vigor and moral integrity is always ready to face the facts of life, and to accept their bearings. While a simple faith has its beauties, it has also its limitations. It can never resolve the perplexities of the thinker. The framework of the faith of men who lived in a world they believed to have been made in six days is obviously inadequate for those who are convinced that man was working out his destiny ages before the date when Adam was so long supposed to have been created.

Probably the chief reason for the doubt of our time is the failure to realize the simple truth enunciated by Jesus, that new wine must have new wineskins. If old skins are used, it will burst them and leak away. Likewise new thought must have new molds. We have

been trying for a century to confine our enlarged religious ideas to the old forms that were adequate before the rise of the sciences of astronomy, geology, biology, and modern psychology. Multitudes have been too lazy or too stolid to take the trouble to make the necessary readjustments in their thinking. This applies to those of simple faith, but of bellicose temper, who deny that there is any valid reason in the new knowledge for changing their outlook; it applies also with equal force to many who should know better; the men of various grades of enlightenment who do not distinguish between an inadequate creed and the larger truth which the creed expresses in stuttering accents. To see that the world was not made out of nothing is not to eliminate God, though many have made the blunder of regarding this recognition as the equivalent of such a denial.

Here then is the seat of our trouble and also the ground of our hope. We need a larger God than our fathers, because we live in an infinitely larger world; in fact, our world is but an infinitesimal fraction of a universe. Before we pass final judgment upon the meaning of the sorrows and disappointments of the human race, we must, as Kant saw clearly and stated forcefully, get a clear perspective of the end in view. If the happiness of the individual—his success in his enterprises and his freedom from pain—is the supreme goal of life; if the universe is only a place of pleasure, then it must appear that, whatever its cause and origin, it is so colossal a failure that belief in divine control is impossible.

But if we take the longest view and look upon the universe as the training ground of the spirit, many of our perplexities will be relegated forthwith to a sec-

ondary place. They will be seen to represent temporary or provisional stages in a process whose complete justification will only become evident when its fruits mature in the form of virtuous souls. This is what Kant meant by value or worth—the idea which stands in the forefront of his ethics. In his own words :

Nothing can be conceived, in the world or out of it, which can be considered good without qualification except a good will. Intelligence, wit, judgment, and the other talents of the mind, however they may be named, or courage, resolution, perseverance, as qualities of temperament, are undoubtedly good and desirable in many respects; but these gifts of nature may also be extremely bad and mischievous if the will which is to make use of them, and which therefore constitutes what is called character, is not good. Because of their lack of great convictions, their influence for good is not commensurate with their native powers.²

In this profound insight judgment is pronounced upon many of the most brilliant intellects of our time. Deep as was the awe kindled in the mind of Kant by the contemplation of the starry heavens, still more profound was that aroused by the moral law within the soul of man. Even the "stars and systems wheeling past" have meaning only as in their sublimity they minister to the reflective mind, and thus serve in the education of the race.

From this point of view, all the stumbling blocks to which reference has been made are removed or rather avoided. If we agree that happiness is not the main purpose of existence and that it is only incidental at

² "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals" (Abbott's Translation, p. 9.)

best, the ground is cut from under most of the arguments of the pessimist. If the end for which the world was made is the culture of men of noble character, it is obvious that we have no reason to murmur or complain about the cost. The quartz must be crushed before the precious metal can be extracted; the grapes must be pressed before the wine fills the beaker. Painful though the process, it is a part of the price that must be paid for the ultimate good—virtuous souls that amid the strains and stresses of existence, like seasoned timber, never give.

IV

Much of the prevalent agnosticism, skepticism, and indifference toward God, is due to lack of imagination. When the little creedal systems of our ancestors break under the strain of increasing knowledge, it is easier to disavow the reality of religious faith than to reconstruct the broken shelters. Yet sooner or later the reconstruction must be done, for human society can not long hold together without the binding conviction that there is a controlling purpose in life. If men are but the casual outcome of mechanical forces combining and recombining, but altogether unwitting of what they are creating and destroying, the will to live and to act nobly can scarcely be sustained. Marcus Aurelius spoke for multitudes when he said: "The world is either a welter of alternate combination and dispersion or a unity of order and providence. If the former, why do I care about anything else than how I shall at last become earth? But on the other alternative, I reverence, I stand steadfast, I find heart in the power that disposes all."

Because the men of spiritual insight in all ages have recoiled from the outrage to their deepest convictions involved in the conclusion that love, justice, honor, fidelity, and our other ideals are but the fortuitous effects of mechanical forces in a constant process of redistribution, they have always been ready to begin the arduous task of reconstruction when for any reason the house of faith has collapsed. Adam and Eve driven from the comforts of Eden are symbolic of man's perpetual dispossession. No sooner is he established in full harmony with his environment, than some cosmic tidal wave sweeps him from his apparent security. He builds up a system of government that seems to contain every element of safety and every promise of permanence, only to find in the day of its greatest achievement that it is already slipping from its foundations. Driven from the garden, man makes a home for himself in the wilderness, tempering his will in the fires of opposition by the assurance that he is the unique beneficiary of divine favor, and that the people who are trying to thwart him are the enemies of his God, who are to be driven off like chaff before the tempest. "The Lord will have them in derision." Later when he learns that these devotees of alien faiths are unconquerable, and that they have become the proud possessors of many of earth's choicest gifts, he fortifies his wounded faith with the assurance that a day will come when the balance shall be restored and every wrong redressed.

No more interesting historical survey could be made than that which would show the perpetual process of readjustment through which Christian thought has gone. An outstanding example is the belief in the early church in the immediate second coming of Christ,

an idea which soon gave way to a rational practical outlook upon life; then there was the reluctant acceptance of the Copernican astronomy which at first seemed likely to undermine the faith, because it was said to contradict the Bible; again the rise of geology forced a reconsideration of the age of the earth. And always there were those who heralded scientific discoveries with jeremiads, holding that if they were true, or accepted as true, they would destroy civilization. It is evident that up to the present all such vaticinations have proved false. Whenever it has been necessary, the house of faith has been rebuilt on a larger scale to shelter the increased knowledge. This justifies the optimistic conclusion that order will rise out of the present disorder so evident in disobedience to law, the decay of the family, the breakdown of ancient sanctions, the declining influence of the church, the lost respect for legislative assemblies and courts of justice, the strife of religious sects, and the widespread materialism and sensuality which characterize our time.

Disconcerting and discouraging though our analysis of present life may be, those whose faith is undergirded by a knowledge of history can face the future with unperturbed hearts. They know that the idea of evolution can be built into the structure of Christian doctrine without more difficulty than the revelations of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton. In fact, to change the figure, it has been already woven permanently into the tissue of modern thought. Sooner or later the militantly conservative section of the church will see the futility of denying what it already more than half believes, and will also understand that science is not an enemy but an auxiliary of an intelligent faith. Whether applied to the study of cosmic methods and processes,

the differentiation and spread of life, the rise of human institutions, or the growth of the Bible through numerous gradations of morality and spirituality, science cannot but enlarge our conception of the mystery and power of the creative intelligence which alone offers a key to the riddle of the baffling and overwhelming wonder of the universe.

V

In a sky which is brooding and portentous for all who are conscious of the grave dangers which menace our civilization, there is one promising rift through which the sun of hope brightly gleams. This is the increasing recognition of our human inability to cope with the evils induced by the almost universal demand for material comforts and pleasures. Scientists, statesmen, jurists, and journalists are joining with religious leaders in trying to find some way to quicken the sense of God. We have good roads, motor cars, electric lights, summer homes, talking machines, moving pictures, airplanes, and radios. Into the making and use of these, many of which are luxuries, much of the communal effort goes, with the result that our fiscal capacity is under constant strain. These things hold the primary loyalty of the great majority of our people. Theoretically many profess to follow him who has told us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all necessary material gifts will be added to them, but in practice they have reversed the process. Seeking first the things of transitory value, they have lost sight of those of permanent value. The sinister results are evident in war, industrial conflicts, racial

hatreds, and strangest of all, religious controversy and reaction.

Somehow or other we have got to find the buoyancy which is derived from the cultivation of the soul; we have got to get back what Dr. Jacks has called "the lost radiance of the Christian religion"; artificiality and formality must yield to the creative joys which flow from simple tastes and high thinking; the externality of our life which now functions in luxury, triviality of interest, the disinclination to think, and speed, must be replaced by that inward resourcefulness which is the experience of those who know and trust God. The visible world of practical life must be complemented by the invisible spiritual world of which so many have no knowledge. How can it be done? God!—is the only answer to this question. He is the one medicament for our personal and social ills, the sole satisfaction for our needs. He is the only guaranty against man's greed, selfishness, bigotry, sensuality, and internecine strife. Until he is allowed to enter freely into our sovereign souls—liberating our spiritual potencies, oxygenating our stagnant ideals, releasing our nobler impulses—every suggested reform, whether it be prohibition, equal suffrage, a world federation—or all these institutions combined—will prove to be only a makeshift or series of makeshifts. Whatever value any new measure or proposal may possess is due alone to the measure of God it contains.

Probably there are those who will take exception to the vagueness of these suggestions. It is my trust that such objections will dissolve in the light of the succeeding chapters. All of these, however widely they may vary in subject matter or in tone, are filaments

thrown out by a single nucleus,—the conviction that the ultimate essence of the universe is spirit, that God is not only the source of our lives, but the ground of all our hopes, and “the master-light of all our seeing.” The restlessness and wistfulness of our age are naught but the undirected or misdirected longings of man for God as the slumbering deeps in him try uneasily to awaken in response to the call of the Eternal. But man’s answer will remain incoherent and self-contradictory until his spiritual sensibilities become acute. Then he will learn to look for God, not in the unusual and the remote, but in the usual and near at hand. He will discover that there is more mystery and therefore more reason for awe and adoration in the mountains, the tides, the stars, and life itself, with its constant urge toward perfection, than in any miraculous events of the long ago, even though their truth cannot be gainsaid. He will understand that God is as near men to-day as in the days of Moses, Isaiah, or St. Paul, and as ready or even readier to make himself known, because the wider experience of our generation and fuller knowledge of his laws offer him more points of contact with the minds of his children.

When the Christian man has learned this supreme lesson, without losing his sentimental interest in Jerusalem, or minimizing its glories, he will realize that his task is to make a holy city of New York, Chicago, Paris, or London. He will look for evidences of the everlasting mercy not only in the Bible, but in the character of his fellow men in his own generation—in their patience, their quiet heroisms, their frequent willingness to die for others, the wonderful, though usually uncultivated, potentialities of their souls, and the efforts of faithful workers to establish the kingdom of heaven

on earth. He will see clearly that if we confine God to sacred places far away, or even to churches and shrines near at hand, to institutions we call sacred, or to certain times and seasons; to creeds or dogmas which claim to imprison all essential truth, or to the pontifical declarations of ecclesiastical assemblies, the Father will not be recognized when he manifests himself in the beauty, the wonder, and the power of the world, in the effort of multitudes to act mercifully and justly,—and above all, in love with its myriad manifestations.

Where can man find God, and in finding him, find peace, confidence, and ultimate victory? He can find him far away and long ago,—but better still, if like St. Augustine he looks into his own heart and rightly interprets its nobler affections, he will see that God is there. That is the greatest of all discoveries because it opens the door to another yet more important. For if God is in me, he is in other men, in the paths of history, and in the uncharted ways of the future. He is to be found in “the still sad music of humanity”; in the visions and ideals of prophets; in the ceaseless struggle of virtue for the mastery of the world, in the creative spirit which permeates the universe. “He is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

SECTION I: THE GROUND OF RELATIONSHIP

CHAPTER I

MAN'S NEED OF GOD

I

Few famous sayings are more profound than that of Voltaire: "If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent him." The thought in the great skeptic's mind is easily discerned. It would be immeasurably more difficult to explain the universe without God than with him. The world would present an insufferable problem were it not that we can at least partially account for its mystery by the affirmation that it is the work of a Creator of infinite power and wisdom. The first activities of a child in whose mind the light of reason is beginning to glow are an unconscious effort to understand his environment. He touches and tastes every object within his reach. He grasps at the moon and tries to catch the birds in order that he may learn what they are. As he has opportunity, he throws pebbles into the water, climbs trees, picks flowers, and in every way within his power seeks to investigate the world about him. This motive is of course unconscious. He does not realize what he is doing, but in the process he is building up a body of experience which will be of the greatest future value.

After a time he will learn something of the continuity of life and the uniformity of the laws which seem to govern our existence. He will see that certain results always follow certain actions, that stones never fail to fall if they are released, that water seeks the lowest level, that fire burns, and the seasons come and go—that in short there is an order in the texture of the world to which there are never any real exceptions. How is this uniformity to be explained? What a problem it would be to solve the riddle of our existence if there were no integral relation between cause and effect, if one day stones fell upward and the next traveled horizontally through the air or over the surface of the earth! Existence would be impossible under such conditions.

The world as it is presented to us in our daily experience has every evidence of being made according to a definite plan. Everything in it fits into the general scheme, and the only reasonable explanation is that it is the fruit of thought. If we are shown a machine or any object for household use, we have no hesitation in concluding that some one made it. We should never dream of being so foolish as to affirm that a book, chair, or watch merely happened to come into existence. In truth, things do not happen. That is a word by which we cloak our ignorance of surrounding circumstances. There is always a cause. Thus, if we are logical when we face the tremendous fact of the universe with its solar systems and circling stars all moving on schedule time, we must conclude that they were made by some being or group of beings, which is simply to affirm our belief in God. Man needs God in order to explain the universe: otherwise we should be living in intellectual chaos. It is beyond belief that

there should have come into existence without mind and purpose, a world which satisfies our deepest logical needs, enabling us to predict with certainty that this result will follow from this action—as, for example, when we mix sodium and chlorine in equal proportions we get common salt as a result of the combination, or when we pass the white light of the sun through a prism it is broken into the seven primary colors. Man needs God to sustain his intellectual integrity. His restlessness and dissatisfaction in the material enjoyments of life are the blind urge of his soul to assuage its thirst in the everlasting springs.

II

But we also need God in order to explain ourselves. In certain moods we are given to thinking of ourselves in trivial terms. We sometimes hear the contemptuous expression “only a man,” and it is one which we should studiously avoid. The full glory of manhood has yet to be painted in the highest colors it will bear, richer than any artist has ever yet discovered. True, man has much base metal in his composition which too often he does not transmute into the pure gold of spiritualized character. It is possible to paint a grim dark picture in which his bestiality and foolishness are thrown into high relief. The cynic always delights in this kind of portraiture. The grinning crowd composed of men and women of vacant mind, more interested in the result of a pugilistic contest or the baseball score than in the greatest intellectual and spiritual achievements of the age, is a cause for tears. The popular franchise is always given for the mediocre and banal in art, literature, religion, and every other department of human

effort. The prophet and creator have always to wait for appreciation until they are aged or even dead. Most men never think. They live in a material world and the beauties and wonders of the spirit are to them "as is a landscape to a blind man's eye." They waste their powers on trivial objects and in many phases of life seem more akin to the beasts of the field than to the nobler representatives of the human race. These weaknesses are explained when we recall that man is an animal. His life, growth, and death are subject to the control of natural law. His fundamental instincts of self-preservation and self-perpetuation are common to the whole organic world. His conduct is largely or altogether determined by his heredity and environment. He suffers from heat, cold, hunger, and disease, as the animals in the forest and in some cases his kinship to them is indubitably proved by his liability to their ailments.

Yet this is not the whole story. The preacher is in danger of allowing his mind to become warped by dwelling too long upon the sinister elements in human nature. If he does not guard against this temptation, he will have a distorted view of life. This is a partial explanation of the weakness and futility of much of the preaching of our time. It has degenerated into scolding because so many of those engaged in it have focused their attention upon the baser qualities of human personality without seeking to understand the reasons for them. These are menacing enough, but they do not deserve the major portion of our attention. On the contrary, the wisest way of eliminating evil is often to ignore it as far as possible and substitute good for it. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

The best process by which this can be done is to emphasize the higher values of the human soul. Without denying man's origin in the dust of the ground through which he shares kinship with all living things, little consideration is necessary to see the majesty of his potentialities. He enjoys transcendent gifts, particularly the power of thought which unites him consciously and spiritually with the highest among his fellows of every age and place, and gives him an insight into the workings of the universe which makes him a partner with its Creator. But we never can explain a thing in terms of itself, or at least in terms that are less than itself. This is a fact which evolutionists of the cruder sort have forgotten. Man thinks because he derives from a thinker, which is another way of saying that he is a child of God. If we cannot explain the world without God, we find an even greater difficulty in explaining man without him. For while we cannot understand the mystery of the universe in all its complexity, there are certain well-defined areas of it in which we can find our way about with easy assurance. Our kinship with the originating mind from which it flows is proved by the fact that we think in the same terms. It is inconceivable that to God as to ourselves, a straight line is not the shortest distance between two points. Thus we think his thoughts after him because we are his children. This is what is meant by the ancient writer's figure of speech that we are made in his image. To be possessed of life, thought, will, imagination, and yearning for the ideal, indicates a heavenly origin.

This inference is confirmed when we take man's achievements into account. His great epic has yet to be written, wherein the highest praise will not be given

for bravery in war nor deeds of daring as a pioneer in hitherto untrodden wilds. This is not to underrate the heroism of Hannibal, Wolfe, Washington, or Nelson, nor the sublime fortitude of Columbus, Hudson, Peary, or Scott, nor to forget the sacrifice of the unknown soldier. But more rigorous still in their demands for patience, moral courage, and concentrated effort, are the achievements of Plato, Copernicus, Newton, Darwin, Pasteur, Ross, and an army of other scientists and explorers of the mystic realms in which we live and by which we are surrounded. Endowed with the same qualities though working on another plane are the great spiritual heroes of the race, Isaiah, Amos, Savonarola, Luther, Knox, and Wesley. Those were the men who laid the foundations of our liberty, the temple of which is still far from completion. If we would know what manhood is we must turn to them rather than to the poor wastrel who has lost his way—perhaps because he never had a chance. Nor can we account for the great personalities who give content and direction to the course of history, except by referring their origin to something greater than themselves. Hence, the contemplation of man, as of every other fact in the great unitary system of our experience, pushes us back to God.

III

Thus far our consideration has had to do with our intellectual needs. Since we cannot conceive of existence except in terms of reason, our reason must be satisfied or life would be intolerable. But reason is not all of life. We have emotional needs as well. One of

the greatest of these is the necessity for consolation. Man has scarcely come to full consciousness before he begins to realize how frail he is. He learns how brief is his earthly tenure at best. There is no such thing as security against the ills of life. He may invest his money with the greatest care but there is always the possibility of a social upheaval which will overturn the strongest financial institutions. He may be blessed with a great inheritance of physical strength, but any day through accident or disease his health may be shattered. Risk is inherent in our very existence. Without warning we may be robbed of life itself or of all that we hold most dear by the carelessness or evil intention of another.

But even if our plans never proved abortive, they concern only temporary values. A few brief years and the end looms in the immediate foreground. Our control over future circumstances is almost negligible even though we had the wisdom to foresee the best. How pathetic were the efforts of the ancient Pharaohs to secure by endowment the care of gardens in which food would be grown for their use to be ready on their return to earth! The very ground set apart has been desert for centuries, a grim proof of the futility of man's trying to determine the structure of the future.

This raises the question as to whether there is any permanence of human values. Is there any source of healing or comfort when the soul is wounded by the breaking of the home or the miscarriage of its plans? Here God comes to our aid and meets our deepest needs. Through him we are assured that "if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of

God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The outward circumstances of life change but their spiritual content remains. Truth, justice, and love, can never be destroyed, for they are the very essence of the divine. It matters not what popes or assemblies say, truth is truth and cannot be injured, modified, or destroyed. This was what Jesus meant when he told the disciples that the day would come when not one stone of the Temple would be left upon another. Soon that prophecy was to be realized but in the process the Christian faith was liberated from the bondage of place and enabled to spread out across the world.

The assurance for which the heart yearns, and without which it cannot be satisfied, never comes from material things. They pass too quickly to give peace. But life with its strain, struggle, and disappointment, would not be worth while if there were no healing for our ills. The place which the Bible holds in the affections of the race is due to the fact that countless numbers of people have for centuries found in its promises the comfort which has enabled them to carry on in the confidence of ultimate victory however intense their immediate distress. They have felt the contagion of the Psalmist's faith and been moved to share his conviction: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Man needs God to carry him over the hard places, to sustain him in loneliness and grief, and to give him confidence and courage to face the future.

IV

These reflections lead to the climax of the problem we are considering. What are we here for? Surely there is a purpose beyond our intellectual and emotional satisfactions. This purpose is not hard to discover. It is to inform our lives with those abiding qualities which are derived from God. As we have seen, our tenure here is brief. When Thomas Hardy was a young architect, he went from cathedral to cathedral in England, studying their structure and sketching their beauties. And as the message of these massive symbols sank into his soul, he found that in every case it emphasized the shortness of human life. So strong was this impression that its thought became the undertone of most of his work as a novelist and poet. But this very brevity intensifies our task. We must be about our business while the day is ours or night and darkness will overtake us. Nor is it a lightsome thing to do what we are commissioned to do, to take our animal nature with its frailty and passion and make it a fit dwelling place for the spirit of God. A large outlay of energy is necessary before the raw material of life in the form of food can be built up into the bodily system. And even greater still is the measure of strength required to sublimate our passions, our hates, and selfishness, and transmute them into nobility, integrity, and goodness.

No man can reach this height in his own strength. Why should I work for the common good? Why should I sacrifice my own interests for those who will never know me or be conscious of their obligation to me if I do? Theoretically I may admit that I am a trustee of posterity, but posterity is not at hand to

insist upon faithfulness to my trust. Thus the temptation to act in my own interests alone is so great that it often gets the better of me. On the plane of ordinary human motive, there are many reasons why a man should not go out of his way to work for the needs of others who have no claim upon him. Take the case of Sir Wilfred Grenfell! When a young physician in London looking about for a field in which to exercise his gifts, the suggestion was made that he go out to Labrador and Newfoundland to minister to the needy fishermen of those bleak coasts. If his answer had been given from the point of view of human prudence, we should never have known his name. Probably if we had been there and he had asked for our advice, we should have weighed the material returns that a man would derive from the practice of his profession in London, against the oblivion of purely humanitarian service in so remote a part of the world. Yet how wrong such advice would have been! Because he gave himself without reserve to an impossible task, he has the unique reward of fame and good-will during his earthly life and the assurance that he has laid the foundations of a work that shall continue hereafter.

But such a decision, involving as it seemed the essence of renunciation, could never have been made in his own strength. God alone explains the moral heroism of human nature which finds itself in putting the good of others before our own. That in its higher forms it is comparatively rare does not alter the fact of its derivation, nor reduce its majesty to the commonplace. And while most men are too selfish to go far out of their way to make a definite contribution to the promotion of the kingdom of God, every

normal man is potentially a spiritual hero. That we do not become Grenfells and Livingstones in our narrower domains of action is due in large degree to the fact that our sense of God is blunted. Within us all are latent qualities of a superb order which will never blossom in action until we live in the consciousness of the divine presence. Where such consciousness exists there is constant growth in the social virtues, such as sympathy, public spirit, and the will to sacrifice for the common welfare. The impulse from which these qualities come is divine. Man would never be other than self-regarding were he not a child of God and therefore at least dimly aware of his brotherhood with all other men. During the Great War a dying German soldier said to an Englishman who was trying to nurse him back to life in a shell-hole: "Strange, if you and I had met in the trenches, you would have tried to kill me for the sake of the Motherland, and I should have tried to kill you for the sake of the Fatherland, and here you are trying to save me for the sake of the Brotherland." "Love your enemies!" The fact that man recognizes the validity of this command and sometimes rises to its exalted plane proves his divine inheritance and his dependence upon God.

CHAPTER II

GOD'S NEED OF MAN

I

On first consideration the suggestion will seem fatuous or irreverent to many that the God who has made this universe should have any need of a being so frail and limited as man. We share the Psalmist's amazement: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"¹ Man prides himself upon his great achievements, yet it is impossible for him to create the slightest particle of matter. After a few brief years his course is run and he returns to the dust from which he sprang. And though there is moral grandeur in his courage, integrity, and other virtues, too often these break under the strain of temptation and his actions belie his claim of a divine origin. With all his talk of goodness and profession of admiration for such qualities as justice, mercy, and love, in practice he is often unjust, unmerciful, and unkind. Thus the question arises: What service can he render to the Being whose power and thought are revealed in the procession of the stars through the infinite depths of space, and in whose mind are hidden the secrets of the universe, a few of which man has painfully spelled out in building his temple of knowledge?

¹ Psalm 8: 3-4.

But though the value of man to God seems negative in the light of this contrast between their respective powers, it would be a grave blunder to jump to the conclusion that there is no service for him to render. It is always a mistake to dwell too much upon our weaknesses. Of course the wise man takes these into consideration. He does not allow himself to dwell in a world of illusion in which he is not aware of his defects. But on the other hand, he takes account of his assets and does not undervalue them. It is no insignificant thing to have the power to look before and after and to realize that in sacrifice and response to what is true man shares the divine nature. That we are here in the world and have somehow or other been brought into existence is a proof that God has need of us. Nor should we allow the fact that he is infinite and we so finite to blur our vision of our essential relationship with him. A drop of water from the ocean shares the qualities of its infinite source, and since we are derived from God we must possess values that give him an interest in us. He is spirit but so are we in our deepest reality. In that we have the key to the service we can render him.

II

Let us approach our perplexing question by an analogy. Here is an artist who has just painted a picture. It may not be a great work but it is the best that he can do. Into its making he has poured himself. He feels the ecstasy of creation, the radiant joy of having transferred his idea to the canvas and given it permanent and beautiful form. But his own admiration is not enough. If that were the only re-

ward few great pictures would ever have been painted. He shows his creation to his friends and if they appreciate its merit his delight is increased. Again he exhibits it to larger numbers including many a stranger and, if they confirm the estimate already given, his heart is further gladdened, and he is inspired to greater effort. This is true in any field in which man works. The soul hungers for appreciation and, where it is withheld, the best effort is impossible. The tragedy of our industrial system is that it dooms multitudes to non-creative tasks in which their only compensation is financial. A few motions over and over again year after year neither elicit self-appreciation nor the appreciation of others and so their best powers wither within them. The wonder is that so many of our industrial workers retain so much vigor of mind and soul.

This inherent need of appreciation on our part should enable us to grasp in however dim and vague a way God's need of our appreciation. Into the universe which he has made, he has put his best. Its orderliness, beauty, grandeur, and truth, are perpetual sources of wonder even to himself. Its integrity is revealed in the continuity of its laws. But the Supreme Artist is not completely satisfied with his own artistry. He would also have appreciation. That is the meaning of worship. He wants our adoration and will not be satisfied until he receives it to the full. This is the reason he never leaves his children even though they try to escape him.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.²

Man yearns for God, but the converse is equally true: God also yearns for man, and is always drawing him from his thoughtless wanderings back to the paths of goodness. Man's restlessness is the index of God's pull upon his heartstrings. This is the truth so magnificently expressed by Francis Thompson:

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
“All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”³

III

Another and equally basic need of God is that man should work for the fulfillment of the divine purpose. He has laid upon him the task of working out his own salvation. For ages man has been climbing up-

² Psalm 139.

³ “The Hound of Heaven.”

ward from the depths of bestiality, error, superstition, and ignorance. He has been building the temple of civilization which is still far from completion and in many parts is falling into ruin while yet in process of erection. In this colossal task he labors without plans or specifications and moves on in apparent blindness, now building on poor foundations noble structures doomed to topple over, again laying unshakable foundations for the future. But in every step forward man is impelled by an inner force which makes him dissatisfied with all that falls short of what is true and right. He strives for perfection though it seems further away with every advance he succeeds in making. He is rarely sure of the next step, and finds himself continually at the crossroads. But he has to make his choice and, when we take account of his ignorance, the wonder is that he does so well. The greatest statesmen do not know the way; they walk by faith. Yet whether men are conscious of it or not, and whatever their position, they are working for God when they discharge the humblest duties. Often we hear the phrase "Christian work" used as though it were restricted to distinctively religious activities. Such a limitation is wrong. Christian work is faithful service in any field of endeavor. As George Herbert so truthfully said:

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that and the action fine.⁴

God needs every man whatever his capacity, whether he is rich in mind or slow of understanding and lack-

⁴ "The Elixir."

ing in spiritual sensibilities, to do the world's work.

This does not mean that honest effort in facing the primary responsibilities of life cancels all our obligations. Men often speak of paying a hundred cents on the dollar in meeting their debts as though that would guarantee a clear title to excellence of character. Though essential, honesty is only the beginning of Christian duty. Every one has social obligations. The welfare of the community is a burden that should be distributed upon all its members in proportion as they are able to carry it. Any one who evades his fair share of the support of the orphan and the widow, the sick, the lame, and blind, is failing to rise to the level of duty which alone justifies his existence. Yet it is sadly true that large numbers of people who live on the best that the world has to give never think of helping their less fortunate fellows and allow their more charitable neighbors to carry their share of the burden. But God needs their help here no less than in the more prosaic tasks of selling merchandise and plowing fields. His heart must carry a constant load of grief because so many of his children who have strength, leisure, and capacity, fail to heed his call and therefore do not find him, and failing in that great quest fail to find themselves.

IV

Again God needs man as a vehicle of his revelation to the forthcoming generation. For ages slowly but inevitably man has been pushing back the curtains of his ignorance. He has been grasping eagerly for new truth. He has unlocked many a mysterious door, until at last he has at his command a vast body of

knowledge. Starting with nothing, in a state in which he was scarcely able to distinguish between himself and the world around him, he has groped his way upward through the darkness to a height from which he can survey vast realms of truth. He knows something of his own past, and can describe the processes by which the world came to its present form. He has learned the wonderful complexity of matter and, while its ultimate secret is still far off, he has the satisfaction of knowing that he is on the trail of truth. He can avoid many a false lead because of the knowledge he has inherited from the pioneers of an earlier generation. He has freed himself from many a cruel superstition by his grasp of the continuity of law. When the thunder roars ominously and the lightning flashes, he understands that no capricious spirit is trying to smite him. When pestilence appears in the neighborhood, instead of looking for an explanation in an offended deity, he begins to search for the inimical bacteria or amoeba which is the cause of the contagion. Slowly but with steady inevitability he is experiencing the cumulative power of the words of Jesus: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

In every discovery, whether in astronomy, geology, physics, chemistry, biology, or psychology, man is being used of God for the advancement of the divine purpose. The power by which he rises above the level of his own past is not his own. He can no more create an idea than a tree or any other organic or inorganic thing. Each new truth which comes within the ambit of his mind is drawn there by the power of the indwelling God. Thus man is used by his Creator as the instrument by which his increasing purpose is

made known. For every revelation that God has ever given has been given through the medium of the human mind. How else did the Bible come into being? We speak of it as the divine revelation, but that should not blind us to the manner in which it was given. The spirit of truth working like leaven in Moses, Isaiah, St. Paul, and many another consecrated soul, gave them the knowledge of salvation which liberated them from the bondage of error, and as they transmitted it to others, this knowledge was added to the ever growing spiritual capital of the race. Once the Bible was a few of the older books of the Old Testament. Later to these were added various literary strata, until at the Council of Jamnia in the year 90 A.D. the Jewish fathers decided officially upon the canon. In their deliberations they used the same mental processes as those which would be used by an ecclesiastical council to-day, accepting and rejecting the books proposed by majority votes.

The New Testament was also of slow growth. Probably the first collection of its books was the bringing together of the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke,—the synoptics as they are called. To these were added a collection of the letters of St. Paul and subsequently the various other writings which make up the whole. But the singular fact for us to bear in mind is that in this process, the men who did the work, first in experiencing God, and then preserving that experience in writing and later deciding what should be kept as authoritative and what eliminated as of lesser value, were living in time and subject to the same limitations as those under which we labor. Neither Isaiah nor St. Paul had any realization that he was writing scriptures for us. They were doing the

work of their day. In each of them the man and the hour met. True, they had a profound sense of their vocation, but that did not enable them to realize the outstanding rôle they would play in succeeding ages and in civilizations vastly different from theirs. When the Psalmist wrote the twenty-third psalm, his feeling and motive were akin to those of George Matheson when out of a heartbreaking experience transfigured by an unshakable hold upon God, he put us forever in his debt by expressing our faith in the hymn—"O Love that wilt not let me go."

The practical implication of these facts is plain: God's needs and methods are the same in every age. All truth has not yet been made known. What man has learned is small in contrast with what is yet to be learned. Dr. Banting, working in a laboratory in Toronto, urged on by the inherent desire to explore an uncharted field, learns how to relieve and perhaps to cure multitudes of his fellow men who suffer from a dread scourge. He is a living instrument of God used for this purpose, and because of his livingness is a partner with God in its fulfillment. Few men, however, are called upon to make an important discovery, or to impress their generation with sufficient weight to transmit their influence to succeeding ages and gain momentum in the process like Isaiah and St. Paul. But this should not obscure the truth that every one may be an agent of the divine revelation. In making known the gospel of love, brotherhood, and redemption, God needs the support of the humblest of his children. Every one may become a luminous center radiating spiritual energy that will prove a source of life to strengthen the wavering purposes of his fellows. Every one is potentially a center of reve-


lation to make known the majesty of manhood when it is in conscious communion with God—the source of all life and the fountain-head of all being.

v

There is a definite goal to which all these forms of human service lead. This is the ultimate purpose which God has in view. He is working for the complete emancipation of his children from every tendency that hinders the full development of their powers. To each man he has entrusted a portion of himself. With all our frailties we are “light sparkles of the divine.” What the old theologians called “the glory of God” can never be consummated until man has won all the increment possible from the nurture of his gifts. His talents may be five or two or one, as in the parable of Jesus, but he must make them as many as they can become or the divine purpose is that far thwarted.

Thus the call to comradeship with God, to work, and to ordered study of the mysteries in which we live and by which we are surrounded, is sent to quicken in our minds a sense of our responsibility in the building of the Eternal City which is never absent from God's mind. Perfection is always his aim. He is never satisfied with what man has done because he has such a clear vision of the best. Hence no part of the human race has yet reached a condition upon which he has put the stamp of his approval and said: “Here is finality.” Even when great heights were won, as in Greece and Israel, they only opened up new vistas and suggested new endeavors. For a time our forefathers believed that they had reached the ideal,

in the new republic they had founded. Our present discontents and many clashing interests reveal how far they were mistaken. Our eyes have since been opened to numerous injustices no less glaring than those against which they struggled, but of which they were not conscious. Chattel slavery, intemperance, religious intolerance, are examples. And before these are fully remedied, a better educated social conscience will recognize others which must be expunged from our life. Thus the process runs on into the future where the towers of the ideal city can be dimly seen as God brings their outlines into view to encourage his fellow laborers, and to indicate the tasks before them. The man of full stature realizes his obligations to posterity. In trying to meet them he is paying his debt to those who went before him in the only coin he possesses and answering the call of God for his support.



CHAPTER III

GOD'S FAITH IN MAN

I

Faith in God is a familiar idea with which every one is acquainted, whatever his disposition or attitude of mind. But God's faith in man is an idea to which most men have given little thought, or to which they are entirely unaccustomed. Yet even a cursory analysis of the relationship in which God stands to man will show that he is actuated by an unflagging faith in his children—a faith which has withstood multitudes of disappointments and is capable of bearing any possible strain to which it may be subjected.

Nor is God's faith in man different in quality from man's faith in God. They are complementary aspects of the one underlying reality. Faith contains at least two elements. It is first an affirmation of truth, and secondly, a surrender of the will to that truth, or what is popularly denoted belief on the one side and trust on the other. Roman Catholic theology emphasizes the first of these elements and Protestant theology the second, though in some Protestant sects faith is regarded as a body of doctrine no less rigid than that of Roman Catholicism, while in others, the stress is put upon trust, resulting in a blind and impractical emotionalism.

Faith is a New Testament rather than an Old Testament virtue. The reason for this lies in the sov-

ereign place of law in the older era. What God was believed to require of men in the earlier stages of their development was that they should fear, serve, love, and obey him. It was assumed that they would believe his word. And in the teachings of Jesus the emphasis is not so much upon belief as upon action. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "This do, and thou shalt live." Jesus speaks in such clear, universal, and self-evident terms, that the question of unbelief hardly occurs. Men do not dispute over the axioms of geometry or the multiplication table. It is a tragedy that the Christian thought of the intervening centuries did not retain the pristine simplicity of the gospel. If such had been the case there would be only one church with complete liberty of opinion, just as nationality allows freedom of political opinion, instead of the confused babel of strident voices which Christendom presents to-day. While Jesus often uses the word faith in his teaching, it has the meaning of trust in himself and in God. But with the rise of theological explanations of him and his work, the idea of faith became increasingly intellectual. With the death of Jesus, the gospel was preached as a message to be believed, involving acceptance of the truth that he was the Messiah. St. Paul shared this conviction with his contemporaries, but he was a pioneer in that he worked it out on a reasoned basis, and tried to give it an adequate description. With remarkable insight and force of statement he gathered together the great experiences of Jesus, in the cross, the grave, and the resurrection, and argued that men must be united to Christ by faith and share his experiences if they are to realize the redemption he offers. Thus in the teach-

ing of St. Paul the two sides of faith are set forth, knowledge and trust, which result in a mystical union of the believer and Christ.

II

Obviously it would not be correct to say that God believes in man in the sense of accepting any body of truth which man has formulated. When we use the word faith to describe his attitude toward man, the emphasis lies on the idea of trust. He must have had faith in man as a means of self-expression, or he would never have taken the trouble to bring him into existence. For ages God worked to prepare a world upon which living things could subsist. At last it was ready for human life, after it had passed through many stages of development and refinement. Then the Creative Spirit formed man out of the dust of the ground as the fruit of an agelong process. Nor was the climax reached. Man was not all that the divine artificer desired. He was far from perfect. The noblest of men falls pitifully short of the glory that God has in mind for his children. But the fact that he has made man proves his faith in him. Man is the work of God's own hands and we are reasonably safe in assuming that he will not forsake his handiwork.

Again, God's faith in his children is revealed in the wonderful powers he has bestowed upon them. He has given them dominion over the earth. They think his thoughts after him. They have the capacity to look behind across the ages spent in their journey upwards, and forward into the future that is yet to be. So rich an endowment cannot be explained except upon

the grounds of God's belief in the investment he has made. For man's abilities have not been improvised by his maker. They are the fruitage of long and strenuous thought which at last took shape in a form which reveals the divine image. Man's own creations are ineffably precious to him. He treasures the works of his hands. Yet this is not creation in the deepest sense for the most gifted of men can not bring into existence a single particle of matter, nor create the simplest form of life. What we call creation is only the reassembling and ordering of materials already at hand. Our best work is only a faint reflection of divine creation but, since we share the divine nature, we are reasonably safe in assuming that God also looks upon his own work with some degree of satisfaction.

Probably the surest proof of God's faith in man is given in the wonderful way in which he has trusted him to work out his own salvation. He has given him the liberty to choose his own course. While always holding before him the glory of the heavenly vision and planting in him an impulse to obey it, he has nevertheless left him free to make his own decisions. This is the meaning of the story of Eden. Man was placed in the garden with assurances of every blessing if he obeyed the will of God, but no constraint was used to compel his obedience. The reason is obvious. Force is utterly destructive of personality. If God had made a world in which his children had no choice, it would not be a moral world. There would be no virtue in their correct actions. Yet foresight was unnecessary to see that they would often go sadly astray, as indeed they have been doing through the ages. What colossal blunders man has made, bringing disaster upon himself! But God has never

forced his will upon man even in the face of the greatest calamity. The only constraint brought to bear upon him is that derived from the educative value of suffering. Man learns by his mistakes, but having learned he has his reward in the iron in his blood which would be utterly lacking if his goodness were due to his lack of choice.

Yet, on the whole, the human race has been very slow in realizing the wisdom of this freedom. Men often deny to their fellows the very gifts they have received from God. They do not show the trust in them which God has bestowed upon all. This lack of trust is indicated in every attempt to control opinion by duress or to restrict the course of the future. Every theological controversy has its roots in the unwillingness of at least one party in the church to acknowledge the sincerity of their neighbors. What is not seen is that such efforts are in violation of the divine trust which is our common inheritance; and that if successful, they will work irreparable injury to those who, owing to weakness or on grounds of expediency, conform to the popular will. To make a man say "I believe," when no new light is given to him is bad both for the man and for those who exercise the compulsion and also for the cause they represent.

Such compulsion is often attempted in the effort to control the future. In London there are many ancient churches which have long since ceased to render any service to the community but which are continued because some short-sighted donor established a trust for their continuance with the condition that if they should cease to function or be removed to another locality, the funds of the establishment would revert to his descendants. Wherever there is a trust, however fool-

ish, there are always those who are ready to administer it, so that the welfare of the community is checked because of such failures to allow the wisdom of a succeeding generation to find its own way. Not far from Philadelphia, near the center of a beautiful church lawn, there stands an ugly old building. It was the original church and together with the grounds was the gift of one man a generation or more ago when the neighborhood was poor. Meantime it has become a wealthy suburb. The old church is altogether inadequate, but when a new structure was planned, it was found that in the title deed there was a clause which prevented it being torn down without loss of the entire property. So the new church was built on one side and the old one still remains, a permanent blot upon a scene that would otherwise be beautiful.

God never makes that mistake. He trusts his future children not less than those of the present, for he has confidence to believe that there will be at least as much wisdom to-morrow as there is to-day. He knows that life is in a constant flux; that new lights often appear, changing the face of the old landscapes, and requiring the readjustment and modification of our old ideas to meet the new situations. Nor does he shrink from the cost which is involved in this trust. It is often misused. Tragic blunders occur. The world is grievously slow in learning that righteousness, holiness, and love, are immeasurably stronger and more effective than material power. But God trusts men even in the long and painfully disastrous processes by which they learn. When Nikolai Lenine was a young man of eighteen, his elder brother who had been his teacher and hero was put to death by the Czar's government after a summary trial for hav-

ing taken part in a revolutionary plot. The burning sense of injustice kindled in Lenine's heart prompted him to determine upon a bitter revenge and he set to work to forge weapons of the mind to undo the foe who had robbed him of his brother. How successful he was is now a matter of history. If the Russian government of the generation preceding the Great War had trusted the people, there would have been no revolution. Yet through all the pain, sorrow, and death, God never loses faith in man's ultimate victory. Some day a greater Russia will arise out of the present chaos and tragedy. Only those who are lacking in faith in their fellow men, and forgetful that their neighbors are God's own children, allow themselves to fall into bitter reproaches in speaking of their mistakes. To lack faith in man is to deny God.

III

God's faith in man is strikingly exhibited upon the darker backgrounds of history. When the star of human hope sinks below the horizon as it has done occasionally in every nation and even over the whole world, the man who can guide the people to their destiny never fails to emerge. Usually he comes from the most unpromising surroundings; Moses from the desert, St. Paul from a Jewish home in Tarsus, Luther from a provincial monastery, John Wesley from a church which had become sterile in spirit and barren in faith, and Lincoln from the crudest of frontier cabins. Few of the world's leaders in any department of achievement have arisen where we should expect them. Rarely does the man who has enjoyed the best initial advantages realize their promise by achieving

a position commensurate with his start in life. What was there in the home of the boy Shakespeare to justify a prophet in foretelling that he would become the most colossal figure in the realm of poetry? Doubtless there are multitudes of men who are potentially great. This accounts for the dreams and vague imaginings which stir their hearts. But when a man rises far above the common level and becomes a heroic figure, his achievement is not to be explained alone by his superior worth. The hour calls out his latent powers, and he is upheld by those of kindred mind. Shakespeare inspires only because there is a poet in us all. Greatness consists not alone in intrinsic strength, but also in the multitudes of aspirations of ordinary men which take form and meaning as they gather around the figure of the hero. Lincoln grows greater year by year and is credited with a wisdom and foresight he would be the first to disclaim, because men love to give to their own convictions the sanction of his name. In this they are not insincere. The process is unconscious, but it proves their sense of kinship with him, notwithstanding the apparent gulf between their powers and his, and it justifies God's assurance that the man will always rise to meet the demands of the hour however exacting they may be. In the light of these reflections we are on safe ground in concluding that God has faith in us, no matter how questionable our record. Because we are his children he knows that we possess qualities which will enable us to stand in the evil hour. The forces of disruption are great and sometimes appear overwhelming; but greater still are goodness, holiness, righteousness, and love. In the end the spiritual always triumphs over the material. And with all its contradictions and

failures human nature is at bottom spiritual. The reason men often seem so unresponsive to the higher calls of duty and service is due more to lack of imagination than to the carnal mind which is enmity against God. Thus, for those who can visualize the divine faith, it will prove not only a great corrective against discouragement but a great stimulus to heroic endeavor in those who accept God's valuation of their worth.

IV

The converse of God's faith in man is man's faith in God. If he trusts us we ought also to trust him, for we have a thousand times more reason to do so than he has to trust us. He has never failed us, but we have often failed him. And while it is true that men have sometimes felt poignantly that God had deserted them, on closer examination of the circumstances or on more mature reflection, the discerning have learned that they were wrong in this impression. That God has never failed the trusting soul does not mean that we always get what we want. Rather it signifies that he is always with us and ready to sustain us in any situation however hard. What the world needs is a large and intense faith in God. This alone will usher in the parliament of man of which poets and prophets dream, for in its ultimate interpretation and application faith in God is faith in brotherhood and in coöperation in all the relationships of life, whether within the state or in the intercourse of nation with nation. This is not to depreciate social, political, and industrial programs, or paper plans to avert disharmony and friction between capital and labor or the quarrels between governments which often

break out in war. Such programs, when they are worth while, register an increasing faith in God.

One of the surest marks of a lack of faith is fear that the world is going to the bad. Many people are convinced that the forces of unrighteousness are in full control. In the growth of science, and the changes of manners and of opinion which are always taking place, as their old landmarks fade, they jump to the conclusion that unbelief is undermining the ancient foundations. This accounts for the hysteria which characterizes so much of our present day religion. Defenders of the Bible and of Christ rush forward with feverish haste, unheeding of the fact that neither the Bible nor Christ needs any defense. One might as well speak of defending the sun or the law of gravitation. The best and only service that can be done for the Bible is to incarnate its truth and give its message a free field of action unencumbered by any claims of its superiority apart from those which are self-evidencing. This is equally true of Christ. What sane man would dream of defending the beauty or the fragrance of a rose, or the glory of a sunset? What Christ requires of his followers is not defense, but a persuasive testimony to his power to elevate the soul, and endue it with grace, charm, and sympathy. To speak of defending him implies that he is in danger, whereas his only danger lies in the indifference or ignorant zeal of his followers who have not entered into his spirit, and have no real faith in his method. The greatest handicap of Christianity is the unspiritual Christian.

Just as the belief that the times are out of joint and the world going to destruction is a proof of infidelity, so confidence that the truth and method of Christ will

redeem the world is a proof of vital faith. Practically all the troubles of Christendom are due to our failure to take the Christian gospel seriously. Nations depend upon their armaments to protect them against their foes. Men lose their souls in accumulating wealth far beyond their needs because they are afraid to trust God in their old age. They appeal to the courts to settle their differences instead of coming together in a spirit of mutual forbearance and with a sincere desire to discover the reasons for each other's point of view. Probably it is too much to look for a world from which all friction and misunderstanding have been expurgated, but there can be no doubt of a great advance when a conscientious effort in this direction has been made by a considerable number of the makers of opinion in church and state.

Faith in Christ means the faith of Christ, of which St. Paul said: "I live by the faith of the Son of God." And what was Christ's faith but trust in God, which is trust in the fruits of the spirit, which are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance?" Faith is the surrender of the soul to the ideal of perfection—the conviction that he who possesses these virtues will win the ultimate victory. In the interim he may suffer many a disappointment, but that will only prove his soul. Sometimes a schoolboy feels that his father is harsh or unsympathetic when he refuses to help him to find the answer to a question set by his teacher, but with the coming of the wisdom of maturity he will realize that his father was acting in his best interests. Such a refusal is a proof of faith in his inherent capacity to solve the problem for himself, and a recognition that to do so is much better than to have the answer found

by another. But when the lesson has been learned there will ensue an inflow of power which will sustain him in the high adventure of life and enable him to meet every issue in confidence. This is a parable of God's method with us; when we are buffeted by misfortune and the way seems too hard for us to endure, there is no reason that our faith should weaken. We need only to recall that these are the processes by which we are fitted for wider spheres of action. When the world seems to be tumbling in ruin is the best of all times for the exercise of a buoyant faith which is after all only a spiritualized imagination through which the soul sees, glimmering beyond the present darkness and confusion, the street lamps of the City of God.

SECTION II: GOD IN ACTION

CHAPTER IV

GOD AS CREATOR

I

When many of us of an older generation were children we were given a brief explanation of life through the medium of the "Mother's Catechism." In that compendium of wisdom we learned that God made us and also that he made all things. For the moment this was satisfactory. The mind of the child is quick to accept any proffered resting place, though it does not remain there long. As the years went on we saw that there were other questions growing out of these answers. When, why, how, where, and of what materials, did God make the world? The answer in the opening chapters of Genesis did not resolve the mystery. It was not specific enough. We were told that the date of Creation was the year 4004 B.C. or thereabout. This was confusing for geology pointed to a much greater age for the earth, to leave out of account the heavenly bodies which we would naturally think of as equally old.

Nor did it help us much to go to our religious preceptors. Usually they tried to silence our questions by pointing out the sin of doubt. Rarely did they give an answer that satisfied us even temporarily. Their attitude was usually like that of Carlyle's mother when

she was asked by her son, then fourteen years old, the meaning of the Song of Solomon. She gave him the traditional answer, and when he continued, "How is it known that it is symbolical, representing Christ and the Church?" she was shocked beyond bounds. The sight of her horror made him say no more. "I saw I must not," he said afterwards, "and so I shut up my thoughts in my own breast." Needless to say many a life has been irreparably hurt by such an attitude. To ask questions in a sincere search for truth indicates a healthy soul, and when they arise in a growing mind they should be answered as far as possible or, at any rate, honestly faced.

II

There is no denying that our forbears believed in the special creation both of the world and man. They interpreted the narrative or narratives in the first two chapters of Genesis literally. To them those stories were copies of the blue prints by which the Almighty had worked when in the beginning heaven and earth alike "rose out of chaos." But when researches in astronomy, geology, and biology, revealed facts at variance with the traditional belief, there was widespread discomfiture among the devout. If these new doctrines were true, it seemed to them that faith was no longer tenable. No wonder they fought strenuously against the light and were often overzealous in defense of the old ideas. It was in vain. Slowly but steadily the new science created a new world, except in the cases of those who refused to study the evidence. Time was pushed back for millions of years beyond 4004 B.C. Through what processes the earth passed in

its creation only the astronomer-geologist can tell, and there are great lapses in his reckoning, but all scholars have long ago accepted the conclusion that before it was habitable for man it had been æons in the making.

The reason our forbears of the past two or three centuries struggled so hard against this truth is to be found in the conviction that it was at variance with the teaching of the Bible and particularly with that of Genesis. Believing that the Bible is inerrant, it was enough to demolish any scientific discovery to quote a scriptural text which contradicted or seemed to contradict it. John Calvin derided the teachings of Copernicus by a reference to the 96th Psalm: "The world also shall be established that it shall not be moved." John Wesley maintained that to disbelieve in witches is to disbelieve in God because the Bible affirms their existence. Philip Gosse, a distinguished naturalist and contemporary of Darwin, turned his back upon the evidence for evolution in the belief that its acceptance meant the rejection of the Holy Writ. The fundamentalists of our day are belated survivors from this era. They have accepted the erroneous idea that the hypothesis of evolution eliminates God from the world, because it denies creation by divine fiat.

While we should have the deepest sympathy with those who feel that the foundations of the faith are being undermined by modern scientific methods of thought, this sympathy does not justify us in allowing them to block the traffic in religious ideas. The forces of ignorance, prejudice, bigotry, and superstition, must be broken down, and education is the only means by which it can be done. Evolution has passed the theoretical stage and must be accepted as a fact, though its method is still uncertain. This uncertainty accounts

for those differences of opinion among scientists as to the relative importance of its various factors, which the uninformed seize upon to justify their denials of the evolutionary process. But such denials only retard intellectual progress. They do not affect the truth of evolution which is not dependent upon belief nor to be decided by majority vote.

It has already been implied that evolution is not a cause. It is simply a process. But an explanation of the process is as necessary as if the finished creation had been produced instantaneously or in six days in accordance with the story of Genesis. Suppose it could be proved that, as some maintain, William Shakespeare, the actor of Stratford and London, had no poetic gifts and that the association of his name with the wonderful body of literature that is attributed to his authorship was a fraud or mistake. We should still be under the necessity of accounting for "Hamlet," "Julius Cæsar," "King Lear," and the other dramas and poetical creations that bear his magic name.

Thus, whether the universe was made in an instant or was the outcome of an æonic process of development, we are pushed back to God for its explanation. Our everyday experience strengthens the idea of its growth. An oak tree takes many years to reach maturity. The human embryo passes rapidly through many stages of development which correspond roughly with the lower orders of creation. In the growth of the child to manhood, he also passes through sociological stages which parallel those through which the race has passed in its struggle upward from the cave or tabernacle to modern civilization.

The evolution of man has been irrefutably established. This does not mean that the human stock was

derived from any existing apes, but rather that man and apes, as divergent branches, point back to a common stem. Man's life is therefore collateral with that of the ape. As Professor J. Arthur Thomson has said: "The broad fact is that man is solidary with the rest of creation and that the first man worthy of the name sprang from primate parents who begat him. And there is no reason why man should be ashamed of his poor relations. If there is great excellence in him, the achievement, there must have been the right stuff in those through whom he was achieved."¹

Strangely enough the advocates of the traditional theory of special creation have failed to see that this method does not relieve their embarrassment in the lower orders of existence. Birds, beasts, and fishes must still be accounted for and if God made them by his fiat they would still be related to man as being derived from a common source of life. Like him they are made of the dust of the ground. Thus there is nothing disturbing to an intelligent faith in accepting the facts of science which prove to all who will consider the evidence with open minds that man has been upon the earth for hundreds of thousands of years. The only reasonable objection to this conclusion is, as we have seen, that it is at variance with the story of creation in Genesis. But the difficulty will disappear if we make our approach to the Bible from the right point of view. The Bible is not a book of science, but of religion. Its value lies in the fundamental fact that its constant aim is to reveal God. But this is done through the only medium possible in the various periods of history it covers, that is, the thought-forms prevailing at the time. In fact we have not a single story of

¹ *The Homiletic Review*, January 1924.

creation in the opening chapters of Genesis, but two distinct stories from two different periods, and far from consistent with one another. They were evidently patched together by a later editor who did not take the trouble to rub off all the projecting corners. For example, the order in the one narrative is altogether different from that in the other. This does not invalidate their authority in religion, though it does exclude them from the category of science. Both of these creation narratives bring us face to face with God as the ultimate cause of the world and all that it contains. If we can only get hold of this elemental principle in our interpretation of Scripture, most of our theological difficulties will be resolved. We shall no longer feel that we are on the defensive when we are confronted with the Piltdown, the Neanderthal, or the Cro-Magnon man, proving our remote ancestry, but shall understand that the supreme fact is the noblest man the race has produced. He cannot be explained in terms lower than himself, and certainly God must at least be as good as he. This brings us face to face with the fact of Christ and implicitly with the Father whom he reveals.

III

One of the great weaknesses of the human mind is to seek for a resting place and when it is found to look upon it as final. Thus the idea has been widely accepted that the creation was finished long ago. The truth is that creation is an endless process. God is still making man, and a little reflection will show that the divine artist has yet far to go before he can look upon his work with thorough satisfaction. In the

movement of the wind and tide, in the change of the seasons, the growth of flowers, and the flight of birds; in the development of the horse from an animal no larger than the fox in far-off prehistoric days, the creative impulse is at work. God is the ground of every prayer and aspiration, of every struggle for purity and moral worth, no less to-day than when man first became a living soul as he emerged from his long sub-human apprenticeship.

The confusion which so often arises when the creation is under discussion springs from a false analogy. God has not made the world as a mason makes a wall nor did he make man as a sculptor shapes a statue. He works from within outward and is the living principle of the universe—its ground and cause. There is nothing mechanical, arbitrary, or capricious, in his activity. He is spirit, the ultimate essence of all reality, and therefore endued with the necessity for outward self-manifestation. The innumerable forms of life upon the globe, instead of being special creations as our forbears believed, have all developed from a few original forms or from one into which the Creator originally breathed the spirit of life. Who knows but that some of the unlovely forms of existence, for which there seems to be no reason, represent the blundering efforts of the life principle to find a worthy vehicle of expression? This would also explain the dinosaurs and other prehistoric monsters who once splashed in Jurassic oceans and long since were thrown into nature's discard.

Nor is this suggestion any reflection upon the wisdom or the power of God. There is no perfect man, and there are multitudes who are pitiable failures. Yet God is in all men, striving to reveal and express

himself in nobility of character. He works under the self-imposed limitations of his medium. Man is a partner in the creative process, as in fact all nature is, and has to pay in the currency of effort and even of failure, a price for every advance.

IV

Creation implies a goal. Under the divine impulse man would never have made his long ascent were it not that there is always a higher point for him to reach. Our restlessness in our achievements is derived from an instinctive recognition that we have not attained the end. There is still a vast amount of work to be done before chaos gives place to order, confusion of mind to wisdom, and waste of human effort to conservation. The perfection of the kingdom of heaven is still far off. We must work within ourselves and within the community for its coming. A thousand needs are presented to us every day. Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, greed, disease, and many other evils, hold back the coming of the heavenly commonwealth. It is for us to work for their elimination, as well as for the full development of our own powers in every aspect of our lives, morally and spiritually, but also intellectually and esthetically. And when we are thus working, we are being used of God, as channels of his creative purpose.

The value of such effort on our part as registered in the increase of our happiness is immeasurable. Only in the development of our inner resources do we achieve that harmony with our environment which brings us peace. One of the greatest of the world's tragedies is the widespread dependence upon things. Men try to

substitute material for spiritual wealth. It never works. Money can not buy lasting position, a good name, nor even a temporary happiness that is real. Women try to attain distinction by the display of jewels or by dress or even by painting their checks to give them the semblance of health. The pleasure gained from such adventitious methods is always transitory and never satisfies. It leaves a feeling of bitterness and disillusion. As Ludwig Lewisohn has said in describing habitués of the theater: "The features are unmolded by experience; the soul does not break through. . . . Business and awkward dinners and noisy teas and reserve and repression and decorum and conventionality—have left them with a few yards of fur, a handful of diamonds, and neither memories nor hopes in their impoverished hearts." ²

In sharp contrast with the effort to find happiness in material things is the joy which comes from creative activity. Real and lasting happiness only comes from the building up of spiritual capital. To feel that one is wiser, purer, stronger, and more resolute, to-day than yesterday is the essence of life. To be assured that we are enlarging our inner resources is the one guarantee that we are living. As Carlyle wrote to his friend Johnstone: "Without increasing in knowledge, what profits it to live?"

The temptation to which many yield is the hope of quick returns of happiness. Men are reluctant to take the time to lay the foundations for spiritual growth. This is the explanation of the widespread failure to cultivate the latent appreciations of our human nature. The enjoyment of literature, music, art, science, philosophy, and religion in its higher and less emotional

² "The Creative Life," p. 75.

forms, is comparatively rare because the majority of people are unwilling to undergo the necessary discipline. The appetites require no technique. This accounts for the vagaries of popular taste. The thoughtful newspaper whose policy is to tell what is true and to emphasize only what is wholesome is read only by the few, while its rivals which play up every sensation are read by multitudes. The crowd is never discriminating in its tastes, and the crowd is simply the large majority of people, many of whom pride themselves upon their culture and are therefore difficult to teach because they do not recognize their poverty of soul.

One of the most fundamental needs of mankind is the clear vision which will enable men to see that the largest rewards of life both in time and in eternity go to those whose activity is creative. This is another way of saying that in their hearts and minds and purposes, the spirit of God has been allowed to work freely. The spirit is always seeking a place in the soul of man, trying to restore it where it is injured or broken whether by accident or sin, to reduce its chaotic purposes to order, to bring its scattered vision to a focus upon what is true, to fill it with loving sympathy for all the sins and sorrows of the world, in brief—to create man in the image of God.

Modern science has broken down the wall between the material and spiritual in nature, or rather has reduced the material to spiritual terms. No man can say where matter leaves off, for all our old tests have proved inadequate. The radio reaches across oceans and into the depths of the earth, through partitions of masonry and steel and every other barrier as though they did not exist. The only explanation is that every material thing is interpenetrated by a spiritual essence.

What is this but God who "closer is than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet"? The Creative Spirit of the universe is ever ready to meet with our spirits and endue them with new life and power, through which we too shall become creators of that great commonwealth of justice, mercy, and love, which man is always building when the spirit of God permeates and controls his life. The world is a theater of divine activity. God's creative work will never cease till man "has built Jerusalem" not only "in England's green and pleasant land," but here, there, and everywhere.

"Creation's Lord, we give Thee thanks
That this our world is incomplete,
That thou hast not yet finished man,
That we are in the making still—
As friends who share the Maker's plan,
And sons who know the Father's will."

CHAPTER V

GOD AS SOVEREIGN

I

Theoretically, every one who believes in a personal God must be convinced that he is the Moral Governor of the universe. Since he created all things, he naturally and rightly controls all things. Throughout the Old Testament this idea of God's absolute rule runs as a unifying principle. He orders the course of the stars. He is the potter, and men are the clay which he molds according to his will. "Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" "I will direct all his ways. . . . I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil." Even those who are unaware of God's existence are unconsciously fulfilling his purpose. He girded Cyrus the Persian king, though Cyrus did not know him.

This doctrine of divine sovereignty received great emphasis in the Protestant Reformation. It was the central thought of Calvin and other reformers. In some instances they pushed it to extremes which reduce it to absurdity, as when they limited the number of the elect to such narrow proportions as to shut out from salvation the vast majority of men in every age. Yet they did not carry it as far as the Mohammedans to whom God's will is the supreme reality which informs everything that happens. To the devout believer in Islam, not a leaf falls, nor a serpent bites his victim,

but it is the will of Allah. He drives the poor sinner to his crime and rejoices in the penalty he suffers. There is no god but God!

Nor is it easy to escape this conclusion in our thinking if we try to approach the question from the standpoint of the sovereign will. Since God is almighty, whatever is must be in accordance with his purpose. The older theologians fell back upon the Devil to explain the evil of the world, but they did not answer the obvious objection that if this explanation is correct, God must have abdicated at least a portion of his sovereignty in favor of the Evil One. They tried to steer between the Scylla and Charybdis of divine responsibility for things as they are on the one side, and a dual control upon the other, with the result that their deliberations were nearly always misty and unsatisfactory. Fortunately they found their solution in a practical ethic rather than in a theoretical explanation of the divine wisdom, and opened the door to a better understanding of the difficulties by their insistence upon righteous action.

Owing to the modern recognition of nature as a unitary system, it is easier for us than for our fathers to see that though God is sovereign, his will is neither arbitrary nor capricious. He is ruled by the law of his own being. There are many things that he can not do. He can not violate the truth nor undo the past. The spoken word can not be unspoken, nor the shot arrow recalled. He can not make a two-year-old child in two minutes for there is an essential contradiction in the terms of the proposition. Nor can he grant special favors to those who serve him best. They must accept as their reward the consciousness of his presence. His laws are applied to all alike. The rain falls

on the evil and the good. The earthquake destroys the mission house as readily as the pagan temple.

We need to revise our thought about the divine character. In many minds there lingers an idea of God which makes him akin to an oriental despot. Prayer is made to him for special gifts without thought of the effect upon others, should the petition be granted. When one man wants rain another is asking for fair weather. A little reflection will show that the only way to avoid a topsy-turvy world is to make the same rules for all.

We have been too easily satisfied with phrases in shaping our ideas of God. Often they dull the edge of the mind. We speak of him as omnipotent without a clear conception of what omnipotence means. The same is true of the other attributes such as all-sufficient, everywhere present, and most merciful. We can learn to say the words glibly enough but the question is, How far do they reach? As we have seen, the almightiness of God does not enable him to abrogate the laws of his own being, to take a stone and make it into bread, nor to alter a single fact when once it has been brought into existence. What then is the range of its meaning? I do not ask this question to answer it but as a warning against the fallacy of resting on a word as though it solved all our difficulties. The truth is that most of our definitions of God are unsatisfactory because these definitions themselves have to be defined. Until men agree upon the exact significance of the words they use in their discussions, there is nothing more futile than argument upon theological questions. A man who denies the omnipotence of God before a popular religious gathering will immediately find himself in hot water, yet most of those uniting in

the censure would be unable to give reasons for their action, nor would they have any idea of the difficulties involved. This is not honest. We must strive for intellectual integrity which is surely as important as financial integrity.

II

The only legitimate approach to the problem of God's sovereignty is from our own experience. We must begin with ourselves, and when we do so we find that we are hedged about with so many restrictions that we sometimes doubt whether we have any freedom. We had nothing to say as to when, where, or in what circumstance, we entered the world. We had no choice of our parents nor of the capacities with which we are endowed. Our inheritance from our ancestors determined our color, and in large degree our temperament; and our ability to adjust ourselves to our environment is also given to us. We say that the social order in which we live is blind and corrupt. But we did not make it, and if any of us had never been born the city and nation in which we live would doubtless have been much as it is. This is the truth which underlies the doctrine of predestination. Men are pushed on both by an inward and outward urge, and what they are is determined in large degree by forces beyond their control. Thus whatever path the mind of man takes, it is sure to bring him up against the inevitable fact of God's sovereign will.

On the other hand in our experiences we are convinced of a certain degree of freedom. In the practical affairs of life we deal with men as though they were fully responsible for their conduct. We punish

those who do wrong and praise and reward those who are conspicuous in doing right. This means that we believe that they are sufficiently free to determine their own course. Furthermore we are justified by the results, for the assumption of moral responsibility works. The only logical conclusion is that within a certain narrow but sufficient area of life man has the right of self-determination.

A reasonable explanation of this freedom is that he shares the divine nature. If man had no control whatever over his actions any more than he had over his birth, there would be no virtue in his conduct however good it seemed. When he comes to years of discretion, even though his range of choice is limited, he becomes a partner with God in the shaping of his character. The raw materials of noble personality are given him in his native gifts and in the environmental influences which determine in a broad and general way the outlines of his development. But it is for him to fill in the details of the picture by making a right choice in the use of his powers. He has to work out his own salvation, or he would not be a moral agent. It would be short-sighted to suppose that, in this explanation of God's sovereignty and man's freedom, all the difficulties have been cleared away. We cannot escape the fact that our lives are rooted in mystery, nor can we explain how or why we came to be, nor say for a certainty what our worth is. God is beyond the grasp of our finite minds, but for that matter even the finite is inexplicable and is always melting into the infinite. The straight line when extended into space soon escapes the grip of the imagination as the distance becomes too great for our comprehension.

III

We have also another perplexing question which grows out of God's sovereignty. Why does he allow evil to say nothing of creating it? How can we reconcile the rule of a God who is good with all the suffering which prevails in the world? None whose mind is open to the obvious facts of life can deny that in this we have a baffling problem. The good man dies with his work unfinished in the exercise of a sacrificial ministry, while his bad neighbor lives on in affluence. The unscrupulous man wins wealth and honor while his sensitive competitor almost fails in his modest aim to win a livelihood. The author of the book of Job did not solve the difficulty; nor does it seem likely that it ever will be solved. But we know enough to be sure that we can have no knowledge of good without a knowledge of evil. The one is the counterpart of the other. As Milton saw clearly, the material out of which virtue and vice are made is the same:

They are not skillful considerers of human things, who imagine to remove sin, by removing the matter of sin; . . . Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewel left, ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness. Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercised in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste, that came not thither so: such great care and wisdom is required to the right managing of this point.

Suppose we could expel sin by this means; look how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue; for the matter of them both is the same: remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies

the high providence of God, who, though he commands us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us even to a profuseness all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety.¹

Thus everything depends upon the use to which we put our powers. The combative instinct that we inherit from our remote ancestors will be sublimated if it is directed against social or political injustice, or it can be allowed to operate on a low plane of personal truculence and hostility.

Evil is thus the negative pole of good. Light would have little meaning apart from darkness. Our work in achieving worth of character is to withstand being overcome of evil, and to overcome evil with good. Owing to the rule of law there is no escape from a large measure of suffering which we do not bring upon ourselves, and nowhere in the Bible is there any promise of such escape. Jesus suffered hunger, humiliation, and death. He told his disciples that they would be persecuted. He also stood against the narrow and self-complacent interpretation of disaster as a divine visitation upon those who have sinned most grievously. He pointed out that there were other sinners in Jerusalem beside those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell. Yet there are many still who profess loyalty to him who are so uninstructed in his teaching as to see in the Japanese earthquake a manifestation of divine wrath upon a sinful people. Fortunately, the Christian community is outgrowing this superstition, though only a half century ago, when a part of the city of Cincinnati suffered from a flood, some of the clergymen of more favored residential districts above the water level ex-

¹ "The Areopagitica."

plained the disaster as punishment sent because of perversity of the poor who lived in the lower sections of the city. It is ground for encouragement to realize that comparatively few teachers of religion to-day could be found who would give such a reason for a calamity.

But while we cannot explain evil, there is one unshakable position which we can take in the assurance that it is all we need to know. This is the conviction that while we must accept disaster when it comes whether in the form of ill health, broken hopes, poverty, bereavement, or the failure of our friends, God has decreed that we shall always have strength to bear it if we trust ourselves to his guidance and control. Man's primitive belief in an ideal state in which there was perfect innocence, peace, and freedom from responsibility, is altogether inadequate to explain the divine purpose. If Eden had remained forever, there would be no moral worth. Character like every other value must be earned and therefore requires the tempering which comes through pain, affliction, temptation, and sorrow. If left to ourselves, we should never have chosen one of these harder experiences. No mother would let her child bruise himself by falling if she could guard every step he takes in learning to walk. Few indeed are the objects of desire that we should give up for the sake of the benefits derived from renunciation. If we could have controlled the circumstances of our lives, who among us would ever have suffered a broken home or a bitter disappointment? In that event we should all have been lords of the earth ruling over growing kingdoms, healthy, acquisitive, and self-satisfied.

Little consideration is necessary to see that in such an Edenic world, the noble and heroic traits of char-

acter, which make life beautiful and at their best prove man's divinity of origin, would be impossible. Pain in its various forms is thus a part of the great disciplinary process which God has established for the education of mankind. It is never sent to indicate his wrath or displeasure nor for its punitive effects, but in order to temper the souls of men and make them heroic, patient, and sacrificial. And though there are many apparent inequalities and mysteries in its dispensation, we can see enough to assure us that a world without tears would be a world bereft of joy. Thus suffering as a constituent element in human life does not indicate a hard inscrutable will on the part of the Creator, but is rather a revelation of the universality of law.

Nature, with equal mind,
Sees all her sons at play;
Sees man control the wind,
The wind sweep man away;
Allows the proudly riding and the
foundering bark.²

The presence of evil also reveals the consistency of the divine character in showing God's obedience to the laws he has established, since he suffers in all the sufferings of his children, yet works his sovereign purpose out through every tear.

Not long ago two little children of six and four years of age, while playing with matches in a loft, were burned to death. A Job's comforter who came to the heartbroken parents offered the platitudinous observation that it must have been the will of God that they should die. It would indeed be hard on God to

² Matthew Arnold, "Empedocles on Ætna."

believe this to be true. But it is God's law that if children of that age are allowed to obtain matches and play without supervision where wood shavings are stored, fires will be started which will sometimes cause destruction and death. And while it is true that the penalty for parental neglect is terribly severe in such a case, we must bear in mind that the lives of all men are so interwoven that the cruel cutting down of these little ones will probably be the means of saving children yet unborn.

Thus the doctrine of God's sovereignty is not only the best intellectual explanation that we have of the current of events in which we move and over which we have no control; it also opens the door sufficiently to justify the poet's faith. As Tennyson puts it:

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill.
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.³

³ "In Memoriam."

IV

It is a singular fact that those who have had a deep conviction of God's sustained control over their lives have been the great makers of history. Ours would indeed be a hard task if we had no sense of the reign of law. The farmer is confident, when he plants his seed, that summer will follow spring and bring warmer suns which will stimulate the growth of the corn and assure a harvest. The metallurgist knows that steel will be the result when he combines a fractional percentage of carbon with melted iron in the retort. The entire fabric of modern industry rests upon scientific certainty. There are no evil spirits to interfere maliciously with the forces that man sets in motion. Because of this definite knowledge we have built a new civilization in less than a hundred years.

The explanation of the influence wielded by the followers of Calvin and those of kindred belief before and after them is to be found in the same conviction. They believed not only that God rules the world but also that he had called them to be the agents of his purpose. This conviction was iron in their souls. It nerved them to resolute action. They were afraid of nothing and undeterred by no difficulty because God was with them. One and God were always a majority. Often this sense of election made them hard to get on with, irascible neighbors, narrow dogmatists, but it imbued them with power. Their sinews of action were never cut by doubts. We of to-day, who pride ourselves upon a wider outlook, can not afford to do without the same sense of divine control over our lives. This is essential to mental and spiritual health for it ensures a purpose in existence. Nor should it

be difficult for us to realize this sense of divine guidance because science has given us a new revelation which has rectified and enlarged our conception of the meaning of God's rule and man's responsibility and freedom.

CHAPTER VI

GOD AS JUDGE

I

Throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation there runs an undertone of judgment. Soon after the great drama of human life had begun, according to its chronology, the question was raised as an affirmation, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?", and one of the last and most vivid visions of the poet-apostle on the island of Patmos is that of the dead—the small and great—standing before God with the books opened. But even where there is no direct reference to judgment, the idea lies in the immediate background, for the ideal always suggests an examination of the actual. When a man comes into the presence of another who is his superior in character, he becomes conscious of his own defects. The Bible is saturated with the idea of perfection. Righteousness, goodness, truth, and love, form its currency, and whenever our minds make a vital contact with any of these values we are constrained to recognize the shabbiness of our worth and thus to feel that we have been weighed and found wanting.

It is a commonplace that we do not like to be judged. We would escape from the necessity if we could. At bottom we are afraid. True, many men are ready to compete with their neighbors. The college student who has been faithful in his work does not shrink

from going up to the examination. He is confident that he will meet the test. But his confidence is based upon his assurance that he can do as well as others rather than upon a conviction that he is the scholar he ought to be. He knows that if he were to be tested by the ideal he would fail.

In "Pictor Ignotus," Browning has interpreted one phase of this recoil from judgment. The unknown painter is aroused by the praise which he hears given to the work of a young artist, and affirms that he could have done as well. He then goes on to tell of his early ambitions. In imagination he saw throngs following one or other of his pictures through great cities, with streets renamed for him in honor of the event. But he could not endure the thought of his work being bartered and sold by ignorant people without appreciation of his motive, and used to adorn the homes of those who did not understand. So he turned to the monastery and there, year in and year out, painted the mother and her child upon the damp walls of the unending aisles and cloisters, where the portraits soon would fade. Yet one is made to feel, without the poet's saying it, that he was unhappy in his choice. The suppressed desire to express his talent where it would receive recognition however inadequate had caused a secret inflammation of his soul.

The same unwillingness to face reality is described by Cervantes in his story of the helmet which Don Quixote made for his own protection. The material was cardboard, and having finished it, he gave it a blow with his sword to see if it would serve his purpose. But to his dismay it broke in pieces under the impact and in great chagrin and disappointment he had to set to work again. When he had finished his

second effort, he put it on his head and refused to test it in the assurance that he had a good helmet. We may smile at his naïveté, but in truth the story is a portrait of ourselves. How often we prefer a happy illusion to the hardship or the distress which the facing of reality may bring!

II

Little reflection is necessary in order to see that judgment is inherent in the fabric of our existence. Before a new ship is put into commission it has to make a trial trip. This may uncover grave weaknesses in the structure but if they are there the buyer wants to know about them before it is too late. Otherwise he would become involved in loss or disaster. The government, after building a great gun costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, subjects it to a rigid test though this may reveal a flaw which will prove its utter worthlessness. The insurance company before accepting a risk insists upon a careful medical examination and also investigates the morals of its client. Thus life is interwoven with judgment which in its application to human character may be described as the effort to find what is true and to make a proper estimate of its worth.

The essence of the matter is that we are all the time judging and being judged. We have a certain valuation of the character of our friends and neighbors and of all those with whom we come in contact in any way. One man is a musician and, after we have heard him play, we give him a rating in our minds. To another we yield a higher or lower position according as he approaches our standard. The converse is equally

true: we are judged by the world. Sometimes we receive more than our due, and sometimes less; but one thing is sure—we always have a rating in the minds of those who know us, and it is usually upon a lower level than our own estimate of our character.

III

The question may be raised here as to why it is that God judges his children. The reason rests upon the broad fact that we are his trustees. He has given us a great inheritance and he expects us to pass it on unimpaired to succeeding generations. It is therefore obvious that he requires us to acquit ourselves faithfully in meeting our responsibility and, since his interests are so definitely involved, he keeps us within the range of his vision. There is something terrifying in the thought that we are never absent from his presence. Our fathers were dominated by this idea and looked upon him as rigorously stern and exacting. But this is counterbalanced by his absolute fairness. In fact, we have far less reason to fear the decision of God as to our merit or lack of merit than that of our friends, because he never makes a mistake. His decisions are never reversible because they are always just and they are always just because he never fails to take every relevant circumstance into account.

This is where men often make serious blunders. Our decisions are always in danger of resting upon too narrow a base. A man is haled into court and charged with a serious offense. All that the judge wants to know is whether he committed the crime of which he is accused. From the legal point of view it is irrelevant whether the man was neglected as a child, or

warped in soul by an evil environment. The court is not interested in his history and would rule out all testimony that seeks to explain why he grew in such a way as to incline him to criminal action.

But in his judgments God takes account of the unknown factors which make up the background of life, for nothing is hidden from him. Thus an evil action takes on an altogether different character from the divine point of view. God's court is one of equity and it makes all the difference in the world that a boy never had a chance. However stern he is, his sternness does not consist in meting out punishments for offenses that could not have been avoided. Unless we have been openly defiant of his law and his love, we are sure to fare better with him than with men. How often we are misjudged, and how seriously it hurts when we are! Our best friends sometimes attribute to us motives of which we never dreamed and censure us for failures we could not possibly avoid. The absolute truth and fairness of God's decisions inflict a wound that is clean, and thus they never leave the rankling sense of injustice which destroys the corrective influence of many human tribunals.

IV

In addition to his fairness and knowledge of all the facts, God has another quality which is often lacking in the best of human judges. This is a profound sympathy which enables him to understand all the suppressed values of a struggling soul, however baffled and confused by failure. Even the worst of men possesses gifts that are of eternal worth, though often they re-

main potential and never become actual. This explains why in the stress of war or accident a man who in civil life is regarded as of little value suddenly reveals himself as a hero. Qualities which have hitherto been buried in his subconsciousness blossom in action. Perhaps the fault which accounts for the man's failure usually lies in himself, though in some cases this is not so. Circumstances exercise a tremendous pull both for and against the realization of our purposes. One man chose the right path because of a happy word spoken at the critical moment when he had to make a great decision, while his neighbor of equal capacity but without such help chose the wrong way.

Then there are the unrealized aspirations of which the human judge rarely takes account and to which he can never give full value. The world does not know the real man—the man who has tried and hoped and dreamed and missed the mark. He is rated for what he appears to be, commonplace in achievement, devoid of imagination, without gifts, and yet he may have dreamed magnificent dreams and been on the edge of their realization. Even his nearest friends do not appreciate these intangible values which are never translated into material currency.

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work" must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,

So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's
amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act;
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher
shaped.¹

When these considerations are taken into account, we see immediately how much better we fare before the Judge of all the earth, than when the decision is rendered by the wisest of men. Only he who is guilty of the gravest offense against God and man—the sin which is usually hidden from human eyes—need fear to come before his judgment seat. This is the sin of an unloving heart which aims to exclude others rather than to include them within the circle of the divine mercy. Unless we have a right spirit all our other virtues are vain. St. Paul's matchless hymn of love expounds this theme in imperishable terms. The eloquence of angels, faith that would remove mountains, charity that bestows every possession upon the needy, and zeal that carries the believer to the stake, are altogether unprofitable where love is lacking. The imagination of the world is always caught by any of these virtues. The eloquent preacher is sure of a large following. A deep faith in anything will kindle faith in others. Large gifts for charitable purposes always

¹ Browning, "Rabbi ben Ezra."

bring praise, while fanaticism begets fanaticism. But behind every such achievement or combination of such achievements, as the one informing principle, there must be a loving heart or they are vain. However grievous his failures, no man need fear to stand in the presence of God, unless he has been a stubborn denier of the spirit of love.

V

When a trial is going on before a court of justice, the evidence for and against the character of the man who is under investigation is all important. Judge and jury are influenced by their confidence or lack of confidence in the witnesses. If a man does not carry conviction in his testimony, he does more harm than good. But often the wisest judges are misled. False witnesses who want to deceive and others who are self-deceived tell their stories in every court. As a result sometimes the guilty escape and at other times the innocent suffer. But before God there is no lying. The only testimony considered is absolutely true, for he has an infallible record covering every case. When the small or great stand before him, the books are opened; there are no incorrect entries in them, no additions nor omissions. The reason is simple. Every man keeps his own record automatically. The new psychology has unexpectedly confirmed the ancient idea that our every thought, word, and deed are written down and that sooner or later we shall be confronted with these children of our activities. Our fathers believed rather fancifully that these records are kept by an angel with a golden pen; in reality they are retained in our subconsciousness, so that in ourselves at any time, for him who has the seeing eye, there is a final statement of

our account complete in every detail and immediately available.

We often become victims of an illusory security when we allow ourselves to forget past indiscretions or when we seek to compromise with our better nature by offering the argument that to lower our standard once will not matter. Everything we do matters, and any act that is weak or wrong becomes at once incorporated in the fabric of personality. Thus when later we are subjected to a particularly heavy stress, our character is liable to give way. This accounts for the startling collapses which so often occur in the later years of life and which seem to contradict all that the man was before. But the weakness was in his soul all the time, though unsuspected, perhaps even by himself. Sooner or later every man acts in harmony with his subconscious personality. His conscious thinking may be only superficial, for one who is fundamentally dishonest can quote the proverb, "Honesty is the best policy," as fluently as his virtuous neighbor. The quality of our conduct is in the long run determined by the pull of the subconscious mind for it is the sum-total of the character we have built up throughout all our previous activity, superimposed upon or blended with our inheritance.

In the light of these considerations our position before the Judge of all the earth would be highly dubious, were it not that in a fair field of action the good so far outweighs the evil. While every sin we have committed has left its impress upon the mind, our kindly deeds, our sense of duty, and our heavenly aspirations tend to hold the evil in restraint and to give balance and direction to the growth of our souls. Hence we should not yield to depression because of the memory of even

a grievous blunder; the fact that it is recalled shows that we have it in control, and is a partial antidote for the evil it has done. Moreover, God understands how difficult it is to walk without stumbling. He will not require from us more than we can reasonably give. Yet the tremendous consequences that may flow from any ill-considered act should keep us on constant guard against committing any offense that may work irremediable damage to the soul. There is a tragic solemnity in the thought that when the books are opened every act, whether good or bad, and no matter how long forgotten, will be manifest and will count according to its weight, as in fact it is counting now, in the determination of our destiny.

VI

In any court of justice there are certain established rules of legal procedure which govern the judge in making his decisions. Not all offenses are equally serious, and sometimes what seemed to the plaintiff to be an offense is not regarded by the court as a cause of complaint, and the charge is immediately thrown out. This will be even more true when our names are called in the last great assize. There we shall probably be startled by the application of tests altogether different from those we had anticipated. Many human standards will be thrown into the discard. The fact that a man was immersed in baptism will be no criterion of worth, nor whether he sang psalms or hymns in his worship. This will be also true of practically everything over which the churches have wrangled through centuries of discord. Orthodoxy of belief, whether it embraces the apostolic succession, the Westminster Confession of

Faith, the virgin birth of Jesus, or the inerrancy of Scripture, will count for nothing. The devils believe and tremble. No second-hand experience expressed in any creed however historic will be a factor in the decision. What then will be God's canon of judgment? It is so simple that one hesitates to state it. Yet what a reversal of opinions a grasp of it involves! To do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God—these primary duties form the essence of the whole matter. God requires nothing further from his children. If we have any doubts upon this prophetic revelation let us turn for fuller light to the vivid portrayal which Jesus has given of the day of judgment, when as God's deputy he shall register every man's everlasting destiny as already determined by his own action. His decision shall be rendered upon the simple question as to whether the candidate for promotion was kind and just and generous in his relations to his fellow men, and particularly to those who were less fortunate than himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And the converse is stated with equal force: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

These modest ones who form the fulcrum by which we are being tested are all around us. They are the hungry, cold, naked, imprisoned, both of body and of mind. If we would build souls that will stand the test of that piercing light which flows from the throne of eternal judgment, more penetrative far than the strongest of X-rays, we must renounce our false standards of worth, and realize that success is not measured by the franchise of the crowd. Nor is virtue revealed by the repetition of any shibboleth however venerable

and true, but by the self-sacrificial ministry of love, especially for the disfranchised and outcast. The Judge of all the earth will do right because he will give us our rating, not on the basis of what we said but on the basis of what we did for the broken and dispossessed.

CHAPTER VII

GOD AS FATHER

I

While in the Old Testament God is sometimes thought of as father, the conception is restricted to the people of Israel. There is no idea of his universal relationship to mankind. The Jews believed too firmly in their special privileges to be willing to share them with others. And while the symbol of fatherhood is used occasionally to indicate God's relation to Israel, it does not hold an important place in Old Testament thought because of the greater emphasis placed upon God as creator, lawgiver, judge, and sovereign.

When we pass to the New Testament we find ourselves at once in an altogether different and more spacious atmosphere. From the beginning of his ministry, and even before, Jesus spoke of God as his father and the father of all men. In his mind there were no limitations upon the idea. He taught his disciples to pray—"Our Father." He told them that the sun shines upon the just and the unjust, and that the rain falls upon the evil and the good. Nor was this an empty figure of speech to indicate that ultimately every living thing is derived from God. To prove that Jesus gave the word its full content, we have only to remember his assurance of God's paternal care expressed in the words: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give

good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" And if we have any lingering doubts as to his meaning, they will be resolved when we recall the parable of the prodigal son. In it there is no suggestion whatever as to the race of the wandering youth. He was simply a man who had strayed into a far country of selfish unrestraint and when he decided to return his father welcomed him back without censure or recrimination. This is the striking allegory that he used to show the relationship of love in which God stands to all men, no matter what their time, faith, color, or nationality. And while there are glimpses of this universality in the Old Testament, it is not until we reach the teachings of Jesus that it is disengaged from its temporary and local expressions and given full sweep.

Nor does this mean that there are no variations or degrees in the favor which men may enjoy in their approach to God. On the contrary the pure in heart, the poor in spirit, the peacemaker, the man who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, enter into a peculiar intimacy with the Father. Those who do not possess these virtues are not banished from his presence or his care, but they do not enjoy the same intimate contact with him that is experienced by all who strive to express his purpose in their motives and conduct.

In the light of the perfect simplicity with which Jesus has set forth this idea, it is strange that the theologians have built up so many complicated doctrinal systems and have insisted upon their acceptance as a prerequisite of salvation. The only condition that Jesus laid down as antecedent to the full favor of God is the decision, "I will arise and go unto my father." He

formulated no creed. He never insisted upon the proper valuation of himself as the pathway to forgiveness. He framed no such formula as the inerrancy of Scripture, nor did he ever mention the manner in which he entered upon his human career. He does not ask his followers to define him but to follow him, and the practical service in which they are to find him is the same as that which he rendered during his earthly ministry and is to be received by his proxies who are the hungry, the naked, and the imprisoned. Thus in presenting the claims of the Christian faith to the non-Christian we can brush away the entire metaphysical and theological fabric which has grown up around his name and, if we are sincere in our repentance, we may enter the presence of God without embarrassment or fear.

II

The preëminence of Jesus as a teacher is illustrated in the easy and simple approach which he always made to the minds of those he would influence. If he had attempted to define God in philosophical language, he would have failed to reach his goal. He always moved along lines of thought that were familiar to his hearers. When he spoke of the sower and his seed, every one who heard him knew exactly what he meant and gained momentum to follow him in his practical application of the idea to the human soul. This is equally true of the thought embodied in the words—God is your father—because every one knows what fatherhood means. Thus, instead of losing himself in abstractions he found in this word a direct path to the understanding of his disciples and in addition he cre-

ated an atmosphere of reality to sustain them in his absence.

However, this does not mean that the idea of God as father eliminates all the difficulties that are involved in our effort to solve the mystery of our existence. In one sense the fatherhood of God is a figure of speech, for it is evident that his relation to us is on a different footing from that of our earthly parents. From them we derive a specific inheritance in a specific way and though in transmitting the line of life they are doubtless acting as agents of God, this very fact makes his relations to us different from theirs. But the main point at issue is God's attitude toward us. As we have seen, we cannot explain ourselves except as objects of his creative activity; but having made us, what does he think of us? If he looks upon us as an earthly father looks upon his children, we are in a much better position to understand him, than if we were compelled to think of him in abstract terms as omniscient, omnipotent, or even all-righteous and all-loving.

To uncover the significance of this idea of divine fatherhood, let us make a brief analysis of the same idea on its human side. First of all, the relationship between a child and his parents is physical. Their blood flows in his veins. They gave him his life, but that does not mean that they exercise full control over the being they have brought into existence. He is a new personality with the right of self-determination, and while it is their duty to nurture him and direct his development in the early days of his existence before he is conscious of his powers, this does not justify them in construing their relations to him in any other way than for his highest ultimate good. In so far as they act through a sense of ownership they are wrong,

for no human being ever had the right to possess another.

We have already seen that the human parent is a vehicle for the transmission of life from the eternal sources. He does nothing to create that life. He is simply its custodian. Ultimately it is derived from God, so that the resemblances between parent and child are explained by reference to the common source. Thus the spiritual qualities which differentiate us from the lower orders of creation as we call them, mind, hope, faith, and love in its higher manifestations, are proofs that we are children of God. He alone is the source of virtue and in bestowing it upon us, in such degree as we prove our worth, he makes us partners in a divine enterprise. As his children, we are born to an imperishable destiny.

III

All figures of speech break down at some point and the fatherhood of God is no exception to the rule. It must be made to include the idea of motherhood as well. For God stands to his children as the source of that double relationship which in immediate experience is differentiated into that of father and mother. His fatherhood is thus better expressed under the idea of parenthood. As we have seen, parenthood involves care and responsibility for the offspring. The aim of every true father is to do the best he can for his child. He strives to teach him the right way to meet the difficulties and temptations of life. He aims to give him the benefit of his own larger experience so that he will not undergo the necessity of learning by the pain of stumbling drearily along the wrong track. He holds

before him the great achievements of those who have won success in their labors. His thought centers continually around the welfare of his child.

This is even more true of God in his relation to his children. He wants them to be perfect in their various spheres of action, in accordance with the equipment with which he endowed them at the beginning of their lives. But he never makes the mistake of the sentimental father or mother who yields to the importunities of his offspring and bestows gifts that they have not earned. Man must work out his own salvation, and the way is long and arduous. God helps him only when he helps himself. He has given him visions of the ideal commonwealth he would have him establish. Every now and then fore-gleams of the Eternal City flash across his vision to inspire him, but by his own effort he must cross the wastes between his present state and the ideal. God will not lift him over his difficulties for then he would not appreciate his new blessings. There is no royal road to learning nor to any other gift. Though a rich man may collect a vast library containing every book of any worth in the world, the contents will remain unmastered save as he brings to bear upon them the disciplined attention of the scholar; multitudes of poor men will still be richer in knowledge than he. Material possession is no index of spiritual appropriation, and with God it is spiritual appropriation only that counts. This is why he requires the human race to work out its own destiny.

But in the process he is never a disinterested observer. His love is a constant urge in the life of his children that they may do their best. Always before them he holds the ideal. They never reach it, but it serves its purpose in drawing out their highest powers and in-

spiring them to holier action. He gives them constant encouragement in the form of new light as they gradually push back the curtains of ignorance and superstition, opening the door to new achievements as they banish disease, master and harness the powers of nature, and in various ways prepare a more spacious dwelling place for their souls. Because God is our Father, he gives us all good things and helps us to enter upon the greatest of all experiences—the sense of a soul growing into his likeness.

IV

Since divine fatherhood is a reality, there is one implication or consequence of that relationship from which we cannot escape. This is the brotherhood of all mankind. We may not like it, but feelings never alter facts. Many people are democratic in theory but exclusive in practice. It is easy enough to admit theoretically the equality of all men before God, but something quite different and much more difficult to accept the practical consequences of that doctrine. But failure to do so is at the root of many of our troubles. If the employer of labor looked upon his workmen as his brothers, he could not but be more interested in their welfare. If the comfortably situated women of our cities, who spend so much time in what they themselves know to be an unprofitable round of gayety, could be brought to see that the poor of the alien races in the less favored neighborhoods are their brothers and sisters who need their counsel and encouragement rather than their alms, their attitude toward them would be vastly different, for there are few people who will knowingly close their eyes to duty. How much

happier the women of "society" would be if they devoted a portion of their time to direct contact with their struggling sisters. The glory of the life of the spirit lies in the increment of power which comes through giving it away. "He who teaches learns twice over." To take an interest in the problems of another extends the horizons of one's own life. To listen to some one else telling of his struggles, hopes, and fears, deepens our sympathies. On the other hand, to confine our attention to those whose outlook upon life is like our own is to narrow our range of feeling and interest. This accounts for the hard and petulant look we so often see upon the faces of the rich who make the fatal mistake of trying to find happiness in sensuous pleasures. The ancient Jews observed the law of tithing, giving one-tenth of their income to God. It would be well if the modern woman of wealth and position could be induced to give at least a tenth of her leisure to the social welfare. A multitude of poor girls, who are now misled because nobody cares for their well-being, would under sympathetic direction be guided into proper paths. Nor would these benefits be one-sided. The joy of saving a life is immeasurable and the sense of worth which would come from having been of such vital service would enrich the personality more than a thousand social triumphs. The fatherhood of God involves this kind of coöperative support of his purpose.

There are scarcely any limits to the range of duties opened up by a full and clear grasp of the idea of brotherhood and a willingness to follow its implications wherever they logically lead. It lies at the root of all missionary enterprise. We send men to the remote places of the earth to tell others of Christ and his gospel

only when we believe that they are our brothers. It lies at the root of all philanthropic endeavor. Why should we spend our time and money in building hospitals for the broken or schools in primitive communities, except as we recognize those to whom they minister as our kin? In fact, behind all coöperation, whether in industry, trade, politics, or the arts, there lies an instinctive recognition of a common inheritance shared by all mankind. The commerce in ideas by means of which nations enrich their culture in science, literature, and speculative thought, presupposes a kinship which can only be explained in terms of a common origin. In certain moods we may disclaim any relationship to the yellow or black man and deny him citizenship; but in times of vision we recognize that he is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, for his mind works according to the same processes as ours, and his experiences are the same in essence as our own. Moreover, he has his own inevitable way of asserting his brotherhood. The physical diseases from which he suffers prove his kinship for they will destroy us also unless we guard against them, and our only sure protection is to educate him and assist him in stamping them out at the source.

This is equally true of spiritual distempers which work such grievous damage. Among these none is greater than war, though war is only a symptom of the deeper evils of provinciality, fear, suspicion, and hatred, which after long suppression break out so disastrously in armed conflict. Pacifist philosophers are wont to propose disarmament as a cure for war but this does not go to the bottom of the trouble. The mind must be disarmed. These evil passions must be rooted out at the source and this can never be done until men

recognize that those who speak a different language, worship in a different form, belong to a different race, or are otherwise separated from them, are their blood relatives—no less than their fellow citizens and churchmen. The practice of brotherhood alone will cure the jealousies, discords, misunderstandings, and greedy conflicts of interest, which at present mar the harmony of mankind.

To express belief in God as our father, while at the same time denying that men of different outlook and traditions are our brethren, is mockery. Yet we are making this blunder every day. The attitude of the church toward Russia in her long years of struggle for better government, however stupid and blundering her method, was born of failure to realize that the peasant of the Ukraine is as much a child of our heavenly Father and as dear to his heart as any one of us. If that child was acting stupidly, ignorantly, or in a wrong-headed manner, his need of our help was all the greater, so that our neglect of him stands to our everlasting discredit.

V

One other consideration is suggested by our relations to our earthly parents. They suffer in the failures and sufferings of their children. When their loved ones are overtaken by disaster, their hearts break in sympathy. When they choose the wrong path and stubbornly refuse to heed their warnings, parental grief is bitter. This is also true of God. His heart is filled with sadness because of the waywardness of the children of his love. When they suffer in consequence of their sins and disobedience, he suffers with

them. He takes no pleasure in their pain, even though his law is its cause. Every willful denial of the good and true and every failure to do right cause him distress. His heart is heavy with the sins and sorrows of the world, and when any of his erring children responds to his invitation to return to the father's house, his heart rejoices in the decision and he bestows a royal welcome upon the prodigal.

Conversely he also shares in the delight which flows from every worthy achievement. No human parent finds more satisfaction in the faithfulness of his son than God finds in the honor, integrity, courage, and adventure, of those who enter into his mind and share his purposes. The joy of life reaches its climax in this mutual appreciation and coöperation between God and man joined together in the commonwealth of spiritual progress.

CHAPTER VIII

GOD AS WORKER

I

Throughout the entire fabric of nature there is a premium on work. All living things depend upon toil for their existence and some of them are particular examples of industry; the beaver, the bee, the ant, and the termite. But however indifferent or torpid any creature is, it must do some work to live. All have their responsibilities. The lion and other carnivorous beasts prowl through the forests in search of their prey; the fish strikes through the sea; the wild boar roots in the glade; the robin with acute ear listens for the earthworm who in turn bores through the soil, passing much of it through his digestive cavity for the nutrition it yields, a process that is greatly to man's advantage, since it enhances the fertility of the earth. Even the trees that seem to be perfect examples of passivity, standing in the same place from birth to death, could not survive a week were it not for their aggressive self-assertion. They would be shouldered out of existence by their rivals and left to starve if they were not active in drinking in the energy of the sun through their leaves, together with carbon dioxide from the air. With remarkable persistence and strength, their roots push out through the subterranean depths in search of moisture and the various materials they assimilate to weave into the fibrous texture of the bole and branches

above. So powerful in them is the will to live that we frequently see a large rock that a dozen men could scarcely pry from its place, separated from its parent ledge by the steady pressure of a tree that began its life as a tiny seedling in a slight fissure. Year by year as it struggled against its unpromising environment, its roots went farther and farther afield until, under the stress of its accumulating strength, the fissure widened and reluctantly yielded the tree room for expansion.

The labor of lifting the sap to the topmost branches of the trees after the rest of winter requires a vast expenditure of energy. In a passage of striking beauty, Thomas Hardy has described the burden which nature carries in the spring: "The vegetable world begins to move and swell, and the saps to rise, till in the completest silence of lone gardens and tractless plantations, where everything seems helpless and still after the bond and slavery of frost, there are burstings, strainings, united thrusts, and pulls-altogether, in comparison with which the powerful tugs of cranes and pulleys in a noisy city are but pigmy efforts."¹

Few scenes are more attractive to the lover of nature than the zeal and enthusiasm with which the birds go about the arduous task of nest-building. Here activity reaches a climax. With what joy our feathered neighbors do their work, suggesting by their spirit that it must be an expression of the very genius of the universe! They set civilized man an example for they sing in the pure delight of being alive with a definite task to do. Probably the chief reason why every man of refined sensibilities loves the birds is the fact that most of them put their best effort into the making of

¹ "Far from the Madding Crowd."

a home for their little ones. What a world of mystery lies here, that the young oriole, who was herself a nestling not a year ago and who has had no tuition in nest-building—unless, as is most unlikely, she studied the domicile in which she was born—displays such art and skill both in planning and construction! Soon from a high elm branch, far out of reach from the ground, her young will sway in every breeze, safe in their hanging shelter and warm and secure when the north-easter drives the cold rain before it. Who taught her where to find the threads of which the nest is woven, and how to anchor it so firmly to its protecting branch? We call it instinct, but that is only a word to cloak our ignorance. Do not her zeal and faithfulness relate her to ourselves—to man—for is not her work for the generation that is yet to come part and parcel with our own? And how the parent orioles toil for their young! It seems an endless process; all day long they carry insects which they have caught at the cost of unremitting toil. So the process goes on summer after summer and generation after generation.

Thus the will to live finds expression in a multitude of activities. I leave my desk to take a five minutes' walk as an interlude in my writing. Here I am remote from men on a quiet road in the White Mountains. By the roadside there is life—life too exuberant for man's comfort so that he spends weary hours of toil every year or two in arresting its progress with ax and grub-hook. One need not be a botanist to appreciate its wild beauty, the variety of its forms, and the intensity of the struggles. A casual glance reveals the maple or the birch springing from the roots of the saplings that were cut down last year; an occasional pine, or hemlock coming up in a protected corner at the shoul-

der of a rock; numerous grasses that only the botanist could call by name; bracken of various species; raspberry, brambleberry, chokecherry, yarrow, black-eyed susans, daisies, buttercups, dandelions, docks, a seedling apple starting on a long and bitter struggle amidst too harsh competitors; fireweed, and ragweed—the enemy of the man with sensitive nasal membrane; groundpine, juniper, black alder, whose leaves are a boon to the black bass fisherman, for he uses them as food for his helgrammites—themselves another strange type of life with a strange history. Among these various forms of organic nature an unceasing struggle goes on: first, every one of them must work to gain a sustenance, and in the second place, unless greatly favored by fortune, it must struggle against the aggressions of its neighbor. The roadside—even in the north country, where nature is penurious in comparison with the tropics, and where rivalries cease for several months annually in the truce of winter—is a constant exhibit of work.

II

Nor does it matter in nature whether or not the previous efforts have been disappointing; after every breakdown, the labor of repair begins immediately. Sometimes a fierce storm sweeps over the mountain-side, uprooting trees in a wide swath, or snapping their stems as a child might break a brittle twig; sometimes a careless camper drops a match from whose tiny spark a destructive fire moves in fury over wide areas of the forest, destroying the patient work of a century; and always the woodman's ax is busy leaving a mass of débris in its wake. Whatever the cause of the wound, nature has no time for idle repining. The process of

healing the scars begins at once. Slowly but inevitably the lifeless trunks of the burned or broken forest will be resolved into their constituent dust; the brushwood left by the exploiting lumberman with his eye only on the present will be restored to mother earth to nurture other types of flora. Meantime, before the new forest gets under way, a wealth of shrubs will rise to carpet the landscape; ferns and lichens, and a thousand other forms of life will vie with the young maples and birches starting out as gleefully as though their chance to live had not come through the disaster that befell their prototypes.

But the work of nature is not confined to a struggle of living things. On the contrary, this represents only the climax of that toil. Before this was possible a vast preliminary labor had been done. Unceasingly this work has gone on through the eternities, moving light through space, transforming nebulae into suns, cooling planets, and by means of countless processes, fitting the earth to be the abode of life. The task is never completed. We can never say that it is finished. The universe has to be held together. Men speak of the "everlasting hills." It is a misnomer. Looking down upon me as I write is the bold, dome-like summit of Chocorua.² Doubtless it has seemed much the same to the casual eye for centuries. But changes have been going on all the time and will continue to go on. Upon Chocorua's flanks the brooks that leap so gleefully over the rocks and seem so full of fancy have for those same centuries been carrying down the toll collected through the agencies of frost and sun and rain. This is the sediment which goes to deepen the soil of the intervals at the base of the mountain.

² A peak in the White Mountains.

"The hills are shadows and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go."

III

Reflecting upon these facts we are led to see that work is inherent in the very order of existence. It is a constituent element of the universe. Without it, life could not be. The rhythm of the seasons, the changes in the cosmic weather, the continual redistribution of matter, the circuit of the stars,—was it not of these that Jesus was thinking when he said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"? What, indeed, is the stupendous scene we call nature, with its ceaseless action, but the handiwork of God? Thus man has done himself injustice when in his thought he has regarded God and nature as antithetical, or when he has made light of the truth which nature reveals. That truth is divine; it derives from the one ultimate source—God. When we look out upon the beautiful world, tense with activity, our eyes rest upon what God has done, and is doing. Doubtless the ineffable joy felt by men of fine sensibility in the presence of nature, and in attenuated degree by all, is a reflex however faint of the divine Craftsman's joy in his work. The knowledge that it is good gives him that delight of mind and heart which he is glad to share with those who are capable of sharing it with him by their appreciation.

Surely man is not the victim of a delusion in believing himself to be the highest result of the divine activity. So far at least as his experience extends, the highest types of manhood are the noblest works of God.

Is this not the reason the race enshrines its heroes in its memory and throws a heavenly radiance around their deeds? They tower above the common levels of achievement because in them the creative effort of God for some reason or other came nearer to perfection than it usually attains.

Thus we have every reason to believe that God is inspired with the hope of greater success in the future. He has, it is true, delegated a large part of the responsibility to man since he has made him a conscious partner in the working out of his own destiny; but just as no artist is satisfied with an occasional masterpiece, but covets the skill to do his best at all times, so it is a reasonable inference that God is always striving toward perfection in man—his chief handiwork. What he has done in the case of the outstanding examples of heroic achievement—Moses, Socrates, Angelo, Shakespeare, and Lincoln—he would do for all. This inference is confirmed by history. Every now and then in every country under the sun and in every age, the flame of genius flashes out intensively in some artist, poet, thinker, statesman, or prophet. Such men are God's masterpieces and set a standard for the subsequent efforts of their fellows. This does not mean that they are perfect or that God is fully satisfied with them, but rather that in them he has done his best under the conditions of the time.

The fact that such men are so rare, and the masses of mankind so tardy in attaining even a modest measure of truth, beauty, and goodness in character, brings a deep note of sadness into many minds. Those who are conscious of the wonderful possibilities of man when his faculties are properly disciplined and directed have a tendency to become impatient and pessimistic when

they reflect upon his actual achievements. Judged by the standards of God's greatest successes, it is easy to see that the world is out of joint. Probably it is not too much to say that the commonplace village would be an Athens, if all its capacities which now lie fallow had been rightly directed. Yonder plowman has a noble mien and a keen and striking native intelligence. The unsophisticated countryman who planned and built this house in which I am spending the summer was a man of talent, resource, and originality. Under the inspiration of another environment and with an opportunity for schooling, perhaps he would have been an engineer of distinction. My next neighbor in the glen is a poet, though nothing would amuse him more than to hear himself so described. He does not realize the simplicity, concreteness, and inherent fervor of his speech. He does not know the quaint, rich flavor of many of his phrases thrown off with utter freedom from self-consciousness, displaying a surer touch in the choice of the most rugged and effective word than many a professor of philology.

Undoubtedly man was made for greater things than he has yet achieved. This the prophets and reformers see so clearly that their hearts are filled with grief and they cry out poignantly for the world's redemption. "How long, Lord, how long?" is the burden of their cry. They would develop and refine and regiment at once all the latent virtues of their fellows. They would usher in the millennium to-morrow. But the crowd does not hear, or hearing does not heed. Spiritual values are at a heavy discount in the open marts of the world. Usually a book is widely read in inverse ratio to its merit. The demagogue gets the suffrage of the crowd against the thinker. The quack and charlatan

who promise so much more than they can deliver often far outshine the ethical craftsman in the public esteem. The creator of new spiritual values has to wait for posterity to give him a correct appraisal, long after his bones lie moldering in the grave.

Such facts as these form the raw materials from which the skeptic and the cynic fabricate their conclusions. They ask superciliously, "Where is thy God?", since he seems to care so little about the undeveloped resources of mankind, or to be so helpless in the presence of such waste—with the multitude always looking for gayety and sensual pleasure, instead of emancipation from ignorance and triviality that its energies may be released for high adventure. In the impatience thus engendered sometimes the reformer becomes embittered. He is ready to resort to duress to bring about the change he has in view. He would compel his neighbors to accept his plans for their regeneration. Thus we had the Inquisition at an earlier day, and in our own, a large variety of repressive legislation.

But God is never in a hurry. With him a thousand years are as a day and a day as a thousand years. Nor is he discouraged with the work of his hands. For he knows the limitations under which men work; the accidents, the crushing sorrows, the refractoriness of the material which goes into the making of their lives. He knows how easily they are seduced by the world. But he is working not only for to-day but for the ages that are to be. The same patience revealed in the dissolution of the granite hills is revealed in the slow accumulation of social wisdom. Yet to recognize and admit these facts is not a plea for human hesitancy or irresolution. It is simply an attempt to gain the perspective essential to that healthy view of life which we

must have before we can do our best work. And who can be sure that any man is far from the kingdom of God? Scanty analysis is necessary to show that many of the canons by which we judge and condemn our neighbors are artificial and arbitrary. Doubtless in the world to come there will be a wider and freer spiritual reciprocity than we have realized here, a greater charity, a firmer apprehension of reality. Surely one should not be censured for hoping that in more spacious fields men shall be given an opportunity to retrieve their mistakes, and to redress the wrongs they inflicted or suffered here. With God there is no boundary between time and eternity. It is reasonable to suppose that the unrealized aspirations and the broken purposes of this world will find consummation in the next. What we see in man now does not therefore justify the conclusion that God has failed; on the contrary, man in his present state marks an early stage in a process which will be completed only in eternity. Hence the fatuity of passing judgment upon man's present condition and immaturities. Probably it would be as reasonable for us to condemn infants to everlasting punishment for their disobedience, as for God to condemn shortsighted men, who in wisdom are only children, to the "adamantine chains and penal fire" in which our ancestors so ardently believed.

For all that we can tell he who sits in the heavens laughs at the petulance and impatience of those who—yielding to their ferocious passions—look upon mankind as, with rare exceptions, fit only for perdition. Such self-righteousness is itself a sure mark of inferiority. There is no more certain proof of God's goodness than the fact of a world in which self-sacrifice, honor, quiet heroism, the desire to do right, willingness

to bear a fair share of the common burden, and the hope of better days to come, are integral. God is not a blunderer as those who are so ready to censure the vast majority of their fellows unwittingly imply. He is working his purpose out, and in that purpose, all of his weak and sinful children have a place.

IV

Perhaps the most important question which every man is called upon to answer by his life, is the nature of the work that he must do to fulfill his duty toward himself, his fellow men, and God. Here we have inherited a false tradition. Popularly work is looked upon as a curse. The poetry of the story of Eden was hardened into prose by our ancestors who did not recognize its inadequacy as an explanation of the urgent problem of finding food and shelter which besets not only man but everything that has life. The leaders of the Christian church have been strangely inconsistent in their attitude toward the Old Testament. They have disregarded large areas of its ceremonial law, while clinging desperately to other teachings equally immature and abrogated in the light of modern knowledge. Under no conditions should work be regarded as a curse. As we have seen, it is inherent in the texture of the universe. Winds and tides, electricity and chemical action, cold and heat, attraction and repulsion—these are evidences of its universal sway. When man works he is simply adjusting himself to his environment—the universe. He is doing more: he is entering into harmonious relationship with God whose purposeful activity never ceases. George Eliot was right in describing work as “the greatest moral tonic.”

In certain moods, those who have been compelled by circumstance to carry too heavy a burden have idealized a perpetual cessation from toil, but we can disregard such conclusions for they are not the product of normal or healthy minds. Work is the only means through which the higher faculties can find expression. Just as God manifests himself in his creative action, so man's only abiding joy comes from the extension of his personality in the creation of new values. One of the bitterest of life's failures is the man who does not work whether he is rich or poor. Money without labor can not buy happiness. There is no joy comparable to that afforded by creation. Work is therefore the greatest vehicle of blessedness. It concentrates the mind upon a worthy object so that time is forgotten. Foolish people who do not work find the hours hanging heavily on their hands. They speak of "killing time"; not so the worker; for him time is all too short. It is the precious medium in which his life moves and has its being. It is the matrix of his soul.

Unfortunately there are apparent forms of work that are only grinding toil. In these the creative element is reduced to a minimum. In modern industry with its machinery and its elaborate division of labor, often a workman has to make the same uninteresting motions hour after hour. He is scarcely more than the slave of the machine. Such men are robbed of the joy of creative activity. Small wonder that they think only of their wages, and with minds benumbed look continually at the clock until it registers the closing hour! Society is not yet just to them. Such labor must be performed, but where toil does not carry an inherent psychic reward in the joy of creation it offers, the hours

should be shortened, so that those engaged in it may have leisure to compensate them for their sacrifice.

Nor is it an answer to this suggestion, to say that such men would not know how to use their leisure. That does not justify us in denying it to them. But this statement is not true, or would not long remain true if they were given a chance. Few indeed are the householders, however restricted their outlook, who would not appreciate the privilege of working in their own gardens, or at their own benches in increasing the comfort of their homes.

Again, no man, however talented or powerful, is justified in regarding his personal welfare or happiness as an end in itself. Man's blessedness consists in relating himself to God's ultimate purpose. Thus abounding happiness can be realized only by identifying ourselves with some task that reaches beyond ourselves. Yet this fact, great though it is, must not be allowed to blind us to the value of the service that the man of humble place renders in keeping his family together, giving his children the best opportunities he can, and performing his routine duties year after year with no thought of merit or blame. After all, the security of the social order is vested in such men. Valuable and essential though the humanitarian, prophet, and leaders of every type are, their significance rests back upon the inarticulate multitude whose ideals they formulate and apart from whom their superior talents would have no scope for action. The framework which holds mankind together in a social order is the humble toil of the farmer, fisherman, miner, and artisan, and the vast unnamed host who carry the world's burdens on their shoulders and whose essential stability is the reflex of their work upon their character.

If to-morrow the human race should be absolved from work, it is safe to prophesy that its degradation would immediately begin. Work is both the index and essence of character. It tends to draw out the best that is in a man. It affords him a purpose that is worth while. This is where it differs from mere toil. To carry stones back and forward without an object is damaging to the soul. True work implies a plan. This need not be altogether clear to the individual worker, yet to do his best he must be conscious of having a part in a larger purpose than the immediate end he has in view. The hod-carrier on the foundation of a cathedral is inspired by the knowledge that there is an architect behind the enterprise whose magnitude is beyond his grasp.

These considerations indicate the absolute necessity for faith in God before men can take their true places in the great scheme of things. "I must be about my Father's business" is the key to the secret of the power of Jesus. There can be no greater stimulus to a man than the conviction that there is something big to work for, and that he is needed to make it a success. This conviction rather than superior native talent explains the achievement of most of the world's emancipators. They lost their lives in a great enterprise and losing them found them. Such a conviction fortifies the soul with ineluctable determination. It makes a small man invincible.

Thus once again we are pushed back to the conclusion reached before; no matter from what direction we make our approach to the problem of life, we find that our supreme need is a firmer hold upon God. When all men become aware that they are God's agents in the work that they do, the world will be transformed. The

humblest daily routine will become translucent with the light of eternity. None will try to escape from responsibility because he will see that responsibility enriches life. Every man will find in his task the outward medium through which he is to give imperishable content to his soul.

A by-product of work, but one of inestimable value, is the help it offers in overcoming temptation. This is what Chalmers described as "the expulsive power of a new affection." When the will is fixed upon a worthy goal, it cannot be deflected by minor appeals. The passions are sublimated and their strength turned to the attainment of the great object. The idler or the man without a definite goal is always in danger. The artisan whose first thought is the welfare of his home, does not feel the pull of the public house as he returns from his toil. Work fortifies character at every point. It develops precision, patience, punctuality, and many other virtues. But above all, it makes a man a creator and unites him with his fellow-laborers, and with God, the supreme architect, in building the "city with foundations."

CHAPTER IX

GOD AS FRIEND

I

A man can ask of the oracles no more important question than what is the attitude of God toward him. In fact when stripped of all accidental features, that was the essence of questions put in ancient days to the seers and soothsayers who were consulted by a host of agitated clients wanting to know whether their plans would carry or miscarry. When told that the gods looked with favor upon their enterprises, whether of peace or war, they went away happy and confident; but when the cryptic answer revealed divine disfavor their spirits sagged accordingly, and in their discomfiture they lost full control of their native vigor which if it had not been thus impaired would have enabled them to succeed.

No one is prosaic enough to deny that belief in the friendliness of God is a tremendous asset to any man. This is true whether such belief is well founded or not. It affords a buoyancy that enables its possessor to carry through many a project that would be beyond his strength without the moral support of his belief. But, desirable though this conviction is, it cannot be obtained by mere wish-fancies. There are multitudes of sincere people who are in serious doubt as to whether God cares for them or not. Nor should we censure them for their lack of faith. It may be their misfortune but it

is not their fault, for belief is not an external thing, to be put on or off like a coat. As Emerson said, it is fatal, depending upon circumstances, experiences, and an inherent directivity of our powers, over which we exercise little or no control. Much of what passes for faith is counterfeit because it is not based upon a serious effort to understand the issues involved.

In the light of these reflections it is important that if we would be helpful to those who doubt that God is their friend, we should give the question our undivided attention, so as to be able to furnish reasons for our faith as the apostle James suggested. Of course we have this assurance in the Bible. In story and in song we are told that the Lord is our shepherd, that he is ready to hear us when we call, to give us the help we need, to walk with us on the loneliest road and to grant us safe conduct on our most dangerous errands. This assurance reaches its climax in the affirmation of Jesus to his disciples, that he will no longer call them servants, but friends, showing a perfect trust or community of interest between them and him.

II

Friendship was a favorite theme in ancient literature, probably only second to courage and adventure in the emphasis it received. Socrates discoursed upon its felicities and said that "all people have their different objects of ambition—horses, dogs, money, honor, as the case may be; but for his own part he would rather have a good friend than all these put together." Again he pointed out that though men know "the number of their other possessions, although

they might be very numerous, but of their friends though but few, they were not only ignorant of the number but even when they attempted to reckon it to such as asked them, they set aside again some that they had previously counted among their friends, so little did they allow their friends to occupy their thoughts. Yet in comparison with what possession, of all others, would not a good friend appear far more valuable?"

One of the most notable essays in classic or modern literature is that of Cicero, "On Friendship." It was written during the summer of the year B.C. 44 when the author was passing through a period of gloom and disappointment because the death of Cæsar had not, as he had hoped, restored the constitution on its old footing. Fearing the Cæsarians, Cicero did not venture to stay in Rome but spent the spring in one of his villas on the Campanian coast and tried to forget his sorrows in writing and philosophy.

Most of his old friends were dead. He had lost his influence in the Senate. Men listened no longer to his eloquence as multitudes once had been accustomed to do. His old supremacy in the law courts was a memory. No longer was he the center of admiring crowds, and though the men of the new generation enjoyed his brilliancy in conversation, they despised his statesmanship. He was alone. In these circumstances his mind turned naturally to the joy of friendship as a compensation for waning popularity and the other losses of old age. Yet sixteen years before when Cicero was at the zenith of his career, he had written to his friend Atticus in terms which show that he understood what it means to be alone in a crowd: "And so after a full morning levee, as I go down to the forum surrounded by troops of friends,

I can find no one out of all that crowd with whom to laugh freely, or into whose ear I can breathe a familiar sigh. Therefore I want you, I long for you, I urge you to come. For I have many pressing cares, of which I think, if I had your ears to listen to me, I could unburden myself in the conversation of a single walk."

Cicero's essay on friendship is thus much more than the fruit of peculiar circumstances in which he found himself at the time of its creation. It is rather the epitome of years of reflection upon the subject. Because of his intellectual sensitiveness and dramatic power, and the vividness of his personality, he felt, even more acutely than most men feel, the need of the solace that only the friend can give. In his treatment of the theme he voices a universal need, though from a modern point of view his treatment is limited by his silence upon friendship between man and woman, or between women. Woman had no place in ancient ideas of friendship and even to-day Platonic friendships are suspected. Montaigne held that friendship between women is impossible. This cynical view fails to take account of Ruth and Naomi and other shining examples of a like nature, as well as the everyday experience of a multitude of women in modern life. "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."¹

Cicero's definition of friendship as "a complete accord on all subjects, human and divine, joined with mutual good will and affection" scarcely reaches a higher level than this. It is questionable, however,

¹ Ruth 1:16.

whether a complete accord between two persons is possible. Doubtless Cicero felt that this was the relation between his friend Atticus and himself, but Cicero was the more dominant and articulate personality of the two, and the accord seemed to exist only because Atticus often remained silent while his loquacious friend moved trippingly along with his original and striking observations on many matters of interest to both—and sometimes only to himself.

Friendship involves mutuality of tastes and interests together with a deep sympathy which unites the two parties in a common outlook upon life. As Epictetus put it: "Where else is friendship than where there is fidelity, and modesty, where there is communion of honest things and of nothing else."² In this complete sense friendship is a rare gift, yet one that is essential to our happiness. With true discernment Thomas à Kempis saw that "without a friend thou canst not live well" and Homer long before had sung:

Two comrades on the road, two heads in council:
Each thinks for each and finds the better way,
But he whose council is his single breast
Is scant of skill and slower to divine.

Friendship is thus an effective and necessary means of drawing out our latent powers. Bacon was correct in his observation that when a man consults a friend, he "tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshaleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself, and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation." Because he shared these sentiments,

² *Encheiridion*.

Emerson said, "A friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of Nature."

III

Since the need of friendship is so deeply engrained in human life, we are faced with the question of its source. There is only one answer—God. The higher qualities of our nature are rooted in him. So profound is our need of friendship and so lofty the heights to which it introduces us, that we are safe in the assumption that friendliness is a divine attribute. God is our friend who shares the best he has to give, or rather the best that we are capable of appreciating. Our friendships are faint reflections of his friendliness. The more completely a man enters into fellowship with his neighbor, the richer he becomes in spirit.

Perhaps there is no greater need in a growing soul than the assurance that God is friendly. To be able to accept the words of Jesus at their face value—"Henceforth I call you not servants; but I have called you friends"—is to have an effective lever for lifting the heaviest burdens. Nothing is drearier and more depressing than the belief that the titanic forces which shape our lives are entirely impersonal. Such a conviction crushes most of the spontaneity out of life. But to be assured that God recognizes our dignity and worth, and that he wants to enter into our plans and to communicate his plans to us on a basis of mutual good will and sympathy, transforms the slenderest frailty into power. It enables one to say with St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

One of the most perplexing problems we face is how

to obtain the assurance that God is a friend. For granting the truth of all that has been said about the felicities of human friendship, many people have not the imagination to trace them back to their source in God. To them the suggestion seems so vague and remote or even chimerical as to be of no practical value. Thus, if it is possible, it is most desirable to set forth reasonable grounds for the belief that God shares the hopes and aspirations of men and stands in the relation of give and take to them.

Since, as we have seen, God is man's creator, we are on safe ground when we infer that our spiritual qualities must be related to his, owing to our derivation from him. Among these qualities one of the highest is the capacity for appreciation. Without this capacity friendship would be impossible. As we enter into the joys and sorrows of another, and he responds in kind, we establish friendship with him. Surely that is what God is doing with us continually. He enters into our deepest feelings and appreciates our efforts to rise above the native levels of conduct. In every expression of our deeper nature in terms of loyalty to truth, of sacrifice for duty, of devotion to the common weal, and all other forms of spiritual activity, he is present as an inner urge and inspiration. We cannot explain these experiences excepting as the outcome of the impact of his spirit upon ours.

Again our appreciation of the higher values of life, as we call them—of purity and nobility, of self-sacrifice and sympathy—is an index of our appreciation of God. Only in such reciprocal intercourse is friendship possible, and since we have this reciprocity, it is no mere figure of speech to say that God is our friend and we are his friends when we are trying to learn

and do his will. He is goodness and we admire goodness, however far we come from realizing it. God is truth, wisdom, beauty, and love. Deep in the heart of the world there is not only respect for these eternal values, but a sincere and ineradicable love for them. This appreciation indicates, if it does not prove, the reasonableness of the conviction that God is the friend of man.

"Man must be either a god or beast to dwell alone" is one of the famous sayings of Aristotle. He was thinking of the hunger of the soul for love. This is what Henry Ward Beecher called "heavenly homesickness." It is one of our most fundamental needs. Could such a need have been created in us without any provision for its satisfaction? Possibly: but that is most unlikely. Certainly it is more reasonable to believe that just as food has been provided to meet the requirements of physical hunger, so there is a means by which the yearnings of man's spirit may find satisfaction. The friendliness of God as mediated through those of our fellows who understand us and sympathize with us supplies this need.

Nor is friendship synonymous with love though it is closely akin to it. Love does not necessarily understand, as when child and parents have the different interests so that it is a glorious thing when in addition to their mutual love parents and children are friends. The basis of an enduring marriage is also friendship, the sharing of a mutual purpose, the bearing of a mutual responsibility, and devotion to a mutual ideal. The reason for what is called the divorce problem is that in so many marriages this necessary factor is lacking. The evil of divorce will never be eliminated from society so long as friendship is not recognized

as essential to a lasting union, and friendship always involves mutual appreciation.

Sometimes it is said that friendship can only exist between equals, or those who are nearly equal so that in choosing a friend a man should always aim to find one whom he can admire and to whom he can look up. But that would make friendship impossible; it is so obviously onesided. Moreover, it denies the friendliness of God, who is so far above us and so fully conscious of our immaturity, that if equality were a condition of friendship, he could have no friendly interest in us. It is true that the great man is often lonely but that is not due so much to his standing above the common level, as to the failure of men in general to take the trouble to understand him. So it is in our relations to God. We must try to understand him, to be interested in his purposes, to keep our minds open to the continuous unfolding of his truth as it finds new expression in our time. If we make an honest effort to do this, there can be no doubt of his response in kind. The basis of true friendship is always unselfish—not what we can get but what we can give—and when this is our motive, evidence of God's friendship will never be lacking.

Friendship exerts a strengthening and enriching influence upon the lives of those who experience it. It is uplifting for a man even of the highest position to know that his humblest retainer values him for what he is in himself rather than for what he has or the benefits he has power to confer. This is the supreme value of friendship. It softens the asperities of life and buoys up the soul when passing through the floods of desolation and despair. What a wonderful privilege it was for the disciples of Jesus to enjoy such ex-

quisite companionship with the most transcendent personality of the ages! Undiscerning critics have often been at a loss to understand how these humble men, so lacking in initial advantages, became world figures and have exercised so potent an influence over such wide areas of time and place. But the cause is not mysterious nor is its explanation remote. Through their friendship with Jesus they learned the wealth of their own lives and the imperishable value of spiritual ideals.

What joy it must have been for these men, untutored in the schools, to hear their Master discourse upon life and death, God and man, duty and immortality! In this intercourse their minds were not confused by the traditions of the rabbis and their irksome arguments based upon precedent and authority. When they did not understand the sayings of their teacher they asked him to explain, or offered their objections to the startling truths he uttered. In return he treated them with the utmost patience in their misunderstandings and always found the clew to their comprehension in the simple experiences they had all shared. Moving out by easy stages from the known to the unknown, he lifted their hearts above the plane of material interests, until it was true of them, that though they were living in time they were partially domiciled in eternity. Thus they became centers of light, and around them the hopes and aspirations of countless generations have gathered because they were the friends of Jesus.

From such considerations it is evident that life offers no other experience so enlarging, illuminating, and enriching, as the friendship of God. Yet many people find it difficult to believe that this is possible. They think of God as too remote or too busy to be inter-

ested in their little affairs. While admitting that St. Theresa and others of the great mystics seemed to enjoy this relationship with him, they look upon the saints as abnormal and as possessing a sense that is lacking in ordinary people.

This view is sadly myopic. With God there is no near nor far, and to think of him as busy is not only to think of him inadequately as human, but not even as the highest type of human being. The saint is simply the man who in his spiritual life has been able to get a firmer hold upon reality than that of most of his neighbors, just as the poet is the man who can express what the majority of people vaguely feel. We admire Shakespeare because he has said what we would say if our stammering tongues could only speak with ease and grace. This admiration joins us to him in a community of interest for he could never have built his "cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces" if there were none to enjoy the mighty structures of his imagination.

So also our admiration of men of deep religious sense and great spiritual achievement indicates that we belong with them to the confraternity of the friends of God. That we have not more adequately entered into our inheritance is a fault that we can remedy if we will. God is the friend of every man who is his friend. If our attitude toward him is friendly, we shall learn that none of our affairs is too small for his interest and that none of our troubles is beyond his sympathy. If this seems too good to be true, we have its confirmation in him who has taught us more about the character of God than all other teachers together. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Surely no one can doubt that Jesus is the friend of man.

But since he is also the revealer of God, his friendship is an index of God's friendship.

Unfortunately it is true that, owing to our dullness of spiritual sensibility, we go through life largely unconscious of the pains that God is taking to develop our intrinsic capacities for friendly intercourse with him. We are safe in assuming that nothing delights God more than to see his children increasing in spiritual insight and power. It is his constant aim to take them into a fuller measure of his confidence as they become worthy and able to understand. We have an analogy which throws light upon his method in the wonderful patience of the teacher of defective children. As Herbert Fisher, former President of the Board of Education in England, has said: "To teach the blind to read, the mute to speak, the mentally defective to work with their hands, is the greatest triumph which the art of the educator can achieve over reluctant nature."³

In every such effort the success of the teacher depends entirely upon his friendship for the child. His art is the one channel of enlightenment for those who are so seriously handicapped, and that art is possible only because he has the imagination to realize the richness of the reward that will be his, when his little friends understand the wonder and glory of the emancipation that they owe him. So God, with infinite patience, is always leading his friends toward a fuller comprehension of the great adventure of life. There is no doubt of his friendliness toward us. Let there be no doubt of our friendliness toward him.

³ "The Common Weal," p. 80.

CHAPTER X

GOD AS COMFORTER

I

Throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation there runs an undertone of sadness which grows out of our human frailty. Sometimes it becomes poignantly articulate, as when the Psalmist confesses his depression and disquietude: "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. . . . Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? . . . The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow. . . . Thou turnest man to destruction . . . We spend our years as a tale that is told."

Nor is there any denying that these amid a multitude of like utterances express a universal experience. No man in his saner moods believes that he is self-sufficient. He knows how weak and frail he is. His earthly life is evanescent as a dream. A few brief years and his very name will be forgotten in his most familiar haunts. But even in the meantime discouragement and defeat are likely to be his portion. Death is never far from any one however strong. The "two-handed engine at the door stands ready to smite" him or those whom he loves. A single day often changes the entire landscape of life. No matter how smiling a front a man may present to the world, in his own

heart he realizes how precarious his position is. The vast and irresistible sweep of floods is always carrying men into uncharted areas of experience and when old landmarks fade they are in danger of being wrecked upon unsuspected rocks.

But apart from the unusual there is a steady pressure of circumstance which in the end reduces the strongest men to impotency. The day soon comes when they look forward with yearning to the peace and rest of the grave. Thus the cry of the child who has broken her doll and the acute pain she feels are an earnest of the later years. Life at its best is a hard struggle, and there are few who would ask to live it over again. Henley boasted of his "unconquerable soul," but his defiance was counterfeit. He knew, as we all know, that the forces arrayed against him were irresistible.

II

That man has not been made to be mocked in his hopes and aspirations is a reasonable inference. Thus in his infirmity amidst all the impermanences of life, there is a longing for permanence and a feeling which nothing can quench that it is real. Man has never been willing to take things at their face value. He has always tried to look not only before and after, but beneath the surface of himself and of the world. The Bible is a portion of the record of his achievement in seeking the unseen. Among its great affirmations there is none which touches the human heart with more inspiration than the assurance that God is not only our maker, judge, and father, but he is also our comforter. St. Paul called him "the God of all comfort who com-

forteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." This is in harmony with the psalmists and prophets of the Old Testament whose message of power grew out of irrefragable conviction that God is a very present help in time of trouble. They believed that he watched over his children, restoring their shattered souls, strengthening their wavering purposes, creating in them clean hearts, guiding them with pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, and banishing their fears even in the valley of the shadow of death.

While there are several elements entering into the idea of comfort, at bottom it means to strengthen. God strengthens his children so that they are enabled to stand against the destructive forces that would otherwise destroy them. Though technically the New Testament word comforter means an advocate, it suggests the strength and consolation given to him who is the recipient of this ministry. Eventually the soul will triumph over every disaster. The kingdom of God will come. The new heaven and the new earth will arrive. The leaves upon the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. The supreme value of the Bible lies in its treatment of this definitive theme of assurance which is sustained amid every variation and occasionally reaches such a noble climax as St. Paul's sublime affirmation: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

III

This brings us to a consideration of what the divine purpose is in giving comfort to men. Surely none is so important as to make it worth while that this should be done merely for his satisfaction. The pagan Empedocles long ago had a saner view than that:

We mortals are no kings
For each of whom to sway
A new-made world upsprings,
Meant merely for his play:
No, we are strangers here; the world
is from of old.¹

God's purpose, in giving strength and consolation to his children through the ages and the assurance of eventual victory over every enemy including death, is that they in turn may give the same comfort to others who are in any trouble. But who are those who are in trouble and who require the consolation of our strength? Their names are legion for, as we have seen, none is strong enough to stand in his own might alone. It is altogether too much of a limitation upon this idea to think of the troubled as those who are suffering the ill effects of some sorrow or disaster.

Probably if an inventory could be taken of our spiritual assets it would be evident that every man is in need of comfort every day of his life. One reason for this is the elemental fact that no man lives to himself alone. Men are all bound together in a vast network of relationships so that there is no such thing as absolute self-determination in any life. Often we

¹ Arnold, "Empedocles on Ætna."

have to modify our course because of others in whom we have no interest. Their mishaps become ours when they transmit their diseases to us, or fall by the wayside and obtrude themselves upon our attention. An engineer mistakes a signal and a number of homes are broken in the resulting crash. Far away in other cities women and children who never heard his name are compelled to readjust their entire scheme of life because of his blunder. One of the elementary experiments in the study of physics is that in which a number of balls are suspended from the ceiling by strings of equal length in a straight line, and at equal distances apart. The ball at one end of the line is pulled back and then is let go. It strikes the second which in turn strikes the third until the impact is passed along the whole line, and then the process is reversed in the rebound. Something like this is always occurring in life. Men are beaten down by forces they did not set in motion and have no means of averting. Hence they are in constant need of strength that they may keep their feet and retain their confidence when the unexpected blow falls.

But there is a more subtle process in continual operation by which the apparent foundations of life are undermined. New ideas are in conflict with the old. The younger generation causes pain to its parents by rejecting cherished beliefs. Often it is found, when the evidence is examined with open mind, that the former convictions are untenable. This experience has broken many a heart. It accounts for the long struggle against the higher criticism of the Bible, and the unceasing effort to force men to accept doctrines which their reason had rejected. Fear is one of the most cruel of the emotions. It kindled the fires of the In-

quisition and explains the bitter intolerance of those who in our day would belie their Protestantism by driving from the church men of more liberal outlook. Men need to be fortified against the breakdown of faith. They need strength against fear and the evil influences it sets in motion.

Then there is the contagion of ideas. The foolishness of those who seek to control opinion by duress is apparent at a glance. It simply cannot be done. Ideas overleap all barriers. Tariff walls are ineffective against them. One might as well legislate against the sun or rain. But ideas often cause pain in the doubts they raise and the readjustments they enforce. Those of the older generations particularly need comfort when they feel that the foundations upon which they have built their house of faith are slipping. There is tragedy in the experience of the man who has made the inerrancy of the Bible a cardinal doctrine in his thought about God. If for any reason he is afterward led to doubt this dogma, the entire structure of his faith is liable to go down in ruin. But in some degree that is what is happening to us all. The truth we know is only provisional, and from time to time what we have looked upon as solid walls of fact dissolves before our eyes. We have then to repair the broken fabric, and to keep our faith we need the help which God alone can give.

When men in any numbers first discovered that the chronology of Archbishop Usher was no longer tenable, many of them were distraught. It looked as though the bottom had fallen out of all that made life worth while. They had grown up in the conviction that these dates were an integral part of the divine revelation though it was as late as 1701 that they were

placed on the margin of the Authorized Version of the Bible by Bishop Lloyd. Hitherto their world was comparatively simple. It had been in existence about 6,000 years, a long time it is true, but a period the mind can grasp. To pass from that to millions of years, and at the same time to extend space trillions of miles beyond its former accepted limits, subjected many to an intolerable strain. No wonder they were unable for the task and their faith broke under the pressure. They felt that they had been cruelly driven out of a comfortable dwelling place, unjustly dispossessed, much as Adam and Eve had been driven from the garden. And even when they made the necessary changes and readjustments in their outlook, they were not allowed to settle down in peace. They never are. No sooner has a position been established than the restless mind of the thinker begins to play upon it like fire, to search out its weakness, or changing the figure, to probe relentlessly every nook and cranny for hidden flaws. So after the astronomer had pushed space back into infinity and revealed the earth as a mere atom in the universe, causing great consternation in the process, the geologist repeated the experience showing that civilizations existed before the beginnings of Hebrew history. Then came the biologist and looking into the inner structure of man, he discovered the amazing and disconcerting fact of his blood relationship to the beasts of the field. This was the bitterest revelation of all, since man had looked upon himself, not only as superior to the animal creation, but as altogether different in origin. Thus in the light of experience we are pushed to the conclusion that the future will also bring many changes. It is a natural illusion to which all men are subject to be-

lieve that if we could only get our households in perfect order, our work would be over. But as we have seen, there is no final resting place for the mind in any system we can build.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.²

While most of us cannot foresee the revolutions in thought that increases in knowledge will bring, if we have any imagination, we shall not deny the likelihood of their recurrence. Who knows the effect that Einstein with his bent rays will yet have upon man's outlook, or what the final results of the exploration of the atom will be? The motor car has transformed our civilization in two decades, requiring thousands of readjustments and changing our attitude toward many things. Through cumulative weight alone, other inventions, discoveries, and revelations are bound to come, and when they arrive, they will involve many a dispossession.

IV

Such considerations show that the need of comfort is universal. Ultimately God is its only source. All our springs are in him. And when we have received the strength from him which enables us to bear our burden of sorrow or disappointment, or to fit ourselves again into a place of harmony after some spiritual disturbance, our highest privilege is to convey our experi-

² Tennyson, "In Memoriam."

ence of his consolation to others. The purpose of our faith in times of doubt is not to make us unique, but to show the way to those who are timid and vacillating. Faith begets faith, just as fear begets fear, so that a few strong souls who have the strength of God are all that is needed to keep mankind in the right way. This is the underlying truth in Abraham's strong plea for the saving of Sodom and Gomorrah, if he could find a few who were righteous in the doomed cities. It is the ground of Isaiah's faith in the remnant—the holy seed of Israel—and should be a lasting basis for optimism in every age no matter how distressing the immediate outlook.

One of the world's most urgent needs is an increased sense of responsibility in those who are endowed with superior strength. When large numbers of people go after strange gods as they are always doing, in their readiness to join this cult or that, or when they worship at the shrines of pleasure or material power, it is the duty of those who have experienced the comfort of God to arrest the drift if it lies within their ability to do so by earnestly showing the better way. The true scholar always has this aim. He seeks to impart his knowledge that others may share his outlook and enjoy his inspiration. The scientist and philosopher have the same motive; so also have the writer, musician, and painter. In fact all creative workers are dedicated to the holy task of enlightening and inspiring their fellow men without limitation of nationality, race, or creed.

The teacher has a foremost place among the comforters, imparting as he does the strength of God to those who otherwise would be the victims of error and weakness. Jesus called his disciples the light of the

world and the salt of the earth, meaning that they stood out as conserving influences in society and as its protectors against its inherent tendency to disorder. And while it may be objected that the traditional idea of comfort is more restricted and sentimental, having to do with the wounds and acuter distempers to which human life is subject, this broader interpretation of the word is justified because it is constructive and remedial. Furthermore, it includes the tenderer ministry of consolation, in its assurance of strength to bear every burden, and its promise of hope for a better day. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "In my Father's house are many mansions." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

v

We have seen that it is the duty of the man who has received comfort to transmit it to his fellow men. He must become their helper, or advocate so that they also may grow strong. But this is not a burden imposed upon him from without. It is an intrinsic element in his own spiritual health. To hold the strength which God has bestowed upon him, he must pass it on to others. There is no law more certain in its application than that to save our lives we must lose them. As a man gives himself in his interest and sympathy he increases in power. If we give away money we are financially poorer in the amount we bestow, but when

we give inspiration, hope, truth, we are enlarged in the process.

This explains why it is that the men who give themselves grow stronger and become the outstanding figures of history, the heroes of the race. We think of such a man as Albert Schweitzer as sacrificing all that life holds most dear in renouncing a great career to become a missionary among primitive people in Africa. Here is a genius, great as a scholar and thinker, great as a physician and scientist, with highly developed musical talent, who gives up rich prizes of the world that are within his grasp that he may be a source of strength to the poor superstitious natives of the jungle. But his motive is clear. Having received from God the comfort of his great gifts of knowledge and power, he goes to those who are in the troubles which grow out of ignorance and helplessness that they may be strengthened with as much of his strength as he can give them.

This is not the one-sided bargain that it appears to be to those of worldly mind. Such men as Schweitzer have an increasing reward in the form of increments that do not appear in the initial call to which they respond so nobly. Through giving strength to others, they themselves become vehicles of strength. Their relationship to God, who is the infinite source of all comfort, becomes vital and intimate so that in the struggle for light and life they move on from victory to victory. It is only from the immediate point of view which emphasizes quick returns that their lives seem barren. David Livingstone would doubtless have been a successful physician in London had he chosen that course, but apart from a few patients and friends, none would have known of his existence. The increase of personality, which came through giving his strength

to the poor and needy natives of Africa, has made him a world figure and an inspiration to multitudes. Surely there is none so shortsighted as to believe that he did not make the better choice.

To be a comforter to the poor, the ignorant, the distressed, the fearful, the sinful, is the supreme goal of human action and one that never fails to pay high dividends in personal happiness, usefulness, and a sense of the abiding worth of life. The one essential condition to such achievement is that he who would follow this lofty path must continually draw his strength from God who never fails to comfort those who turn to him in their need. In every man, however weak, there is a divine potentiality which will respond to the nurturing touch of a sympathetic hand. But the real return which comes from the practice of the art of comfort lies in its effect upon those who engage in it. As Dr. Felix Adler has said: "Seek to elicit the best in others, and thereby you bring to light the best that is in yourself." This is what it means to transmit the comfort of God to others, your own increase and theirs.

SECTION III: GOD IN ATTRIBUTE

CHAPTER XI

GOD AS RIGHTEOUSNESS

I

Every reader of the Old Testament knows the important place that righteousness holds in its view of life. Around this golden theme the master artist has woven many a beautiful and striking variation. Amidst all the quiet melodies and sudden transitions the voice of eternal righteousness forms the ground tone giving character to all else, whether it be Elijah's retreat to the doubtful shelter of the juniper tree, or David's stricken conscience when Nathan forced him to admit the grievousness of his sin in the murder of Uriah.

Behind Israel in Babylon righteousness had also been a dominant idea. In fact there could not be a civilization without this supreme ethical quality, whatever the peculiarities of its form. To the Babylonians righteousness meant stability and straightness. These were attributes common to both gods and men and were considered of essential importance. The kings claimed to possess these qualities as, even under an autocratic form of government, it was necessary that they should have a reputation for even-handed dealing with their subjects.

But it would be a mistake for us to read our own ethical standards into this ancient idea. In Israel, as

in other nations, righteousness was construed in terms of social usage. The men who possessed this virtue were careful to observe the religious customs of their people, whereas the wicked were those who set these at naught. Righteousness was not inconsistent with deceit as when Abram prompted his wife Sarai to pass herself off as his sister when they were driven into Egypt by famine; nor with fiendish cruelty, as when David tortured his Ammonite prisoners by forcing them under saws, harrows, and axes, into a brickkiln.

II

With the developing complexity of social life morality also developed and with the rise of the great prophets it becomes clear that there was a widespread dissatisfaction with the older interpretation of righteousness. Men could be loyal to the ancient customs and yet disregard the inherent rights of their fellows. Wealth had increased so that the poor man was pushed out of his ancient holdings. The merchants paid him too little for his produce and charged him too much for their goods. Against these evils there was no redress for the judges sold justice to the highest bidder. Their right hands were full of bribes. Those who were responsible for these conditions were faithful in observing the law of new moons, sabbaths, sacrifices, and other ceremonies, and in the belief that they were thus fully meeting their obligations they turned a deaf ear to the cries of the orphan and widow.

Against the mockery of a situation in which religion had no relation to the inalienable rights of the human soul, the prophets raised their voices. Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah spoke out in unequivocal terms.

They denied that righteousness is achieved in the faithful observance of a body of customs, however venerable; or a legal status conferred by a favorable decision in a court of law rendered by a judge who may have made a mistake or may even have been bribed or intimidated. They analyzed the standards prevalent in contemporary life and, with a cogency that has never been surpassed, called for a reinterpretation of righteousness in terms of honesty in business, justice in the courts of law, and sympathy for the widow and orphan. In a word, they placed the emphasis upon right conduct. Perhaps the climax of the prophetic teaching was reached in Micah's famous declaration that God requires no burnt offerings and is not pleased with the sacrifice of "thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil." God asks of his children only justice, mercy, and humility. This enriched the idea of righteousness with an ethical content, as opposed to its legal and ceremonial aspects, and lifted it to a permanently higher plane.

Of course the new ideal was not immediately assimilated by all who heard the prophetic messages. Probably the only result was that it established a goal toward which the enlightened were ever after to struggle. Even yet the lesson has not been fully learned, for there are still multitudes of teachers in the Christian church who do not recognize the elemental truth that the proof of true religion is to be found in character and not in creed or ceremony. "By their fruits ye shall know them" rather than by their membership in this or that church, the manner of their baptism, or by their subscription to a certain body of doctrine.

As we should naturally expect, when we reach the New Testament, the idea of righteousness is charged

with a new dynamic. Its meaning is spiritualized and deepened. No matter how correct the outward conduct, it is not enough unless it is the expression of a pure motive and a right condition of the heart. The spirit is elevated to the central place. Eloquence, martyrdom, and generosity, valuable though these virtues are, amount to nothing save as they are reënforced by love. "If a man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The righteousness of the Christian must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees.

III

The only explanation for the emphasis upon righteousness in both the Old and the New Testament is that it is derived from God who is its source and author. Man shares this quality with him as his child and his chief business is to live in such a way as to exhibit it in all relationships of his life. God is righteous. He can do no wrong because integrity is the essence of his being. Hence the supreme problem for every man is to discover how to develop the spirit of righteousness in his heart and give it expression in action.

It does not take us far to say that righteousness is simply doing right, because the meaning of doing right is still to be determined. But the will to do so carries us back to God, and opens our lives to the influences that flow from him. His life is self-imparting, and when man seeks to do right the divine qualities enter into his being; he experiences their transforming power, and his actions take on more and more the quality of righteousness.

Strange though it may seem, the Christian church

is only beginning to emphasize the ethical content of the gospel. Good works have nearly always been depreciated as a means of entrance to the kingdom of heaven. The injunction of the apostle, "Shew me thy faith by thy works," has been forgotten or discounted. This perhaps more than any single factor accounts for the condition of Christendom in our time. Our forefathers elevated doctrine to the supreme place. The church divided and subdivided on creedal grounds. The controversies which have aroused bitterness and hostility in the reaction since the Great War are all over doctrines and have little or nothing to do with a fuller and richer life.

The common sense of the world has passed this stage. Men of average enlightenment no longer can be prevailed upon to take seriously the difference between the claims of the Presbyterian or Episcopal churches. They call the various churches "denominations," and pass readily from one church to another because few of the distinctions in Protestantism appeal to conviction, in our generation. Rare indeed is the man who has left the Methodist or Baptist ministry to become a Presbyterian or Congregationalist who would assert that his decision was based upon the ground of conscience. Usually he would explain his change as due to temperament, circumstance, congeniality, or larger opportunity.

This was not true two or three generations ago. Predestination, free will, baptism, and apostolic succession were then vital subjects. Many an acrid debate took place among the clergy upon these and allied themes. But it never occurred to the exponents of opposing doctrines to base their claims to divine favor upon the superiority in character of those who shared

their views. An implicit truce was arranged around the text—"By their fruits ye shall know them." Somehow or other the controversialists overlooked the significance of that fundamental law, and it is only now that the more alert leaders in the churches are becoming aware of it. The final test of Christianity before the court of world opinion will not be settled by acceptance of any claims of divine preference. Unless it can be shown that the Christian peoples are superior in character to the adherents of other faiths, Christianity will remain one among several religions. The one invincible argument which will eventually break down all opposition is a righteousness which will exceed the righteousness of the Jew, Buddhist, and Moslem.

It would perhaps be ironical to suggest that modesty is the reason why the spokesmen of opposing sects have been so reluctant to appeal to this principle in justifying their claims. The truth is that the human mind has always been more apt to fix upon the formal, forensic, or legal aspects of a subject than upon its inner reality. Thus in every age the essential character of righteousness has been missed, and not alone in the times of the great prophets of Israel. At last it has become evident to those who understand the modern mind, that religion must function in morality or it is doomed to extinction. This explains the decline of revivalism. Too many of those who professed conversion gave no ethical proof of their change of heart.

IV

No sane interpreters of life will deny the value of creeds and other statements of doctrinal belief. [These,

however provisional their conclusions, represent necessary efforts of the mind to find reasons for faith. Nor will any wise man deny the value and necessity of emotion in the soul's approach to God. But to stop with subscription to a creed is sterile rationalism, and to feel only emotion in our relations to our Heavenly Father, is little more than spiritual auto-intoxication. Both of these weaknesses which arise from a lopsided experience are the bane of current Christianity. There is nothing more grotesquely pathetic than the arrogant certainties of those who deny to others the right of Christian fellowship and the Christian name. The substitution of revivalism for religious education has also been a large factor in impairing the witness of the churches. The only relief for the situation lies not in a new ethic but in a new emphasis upon the ancient ethic, upon righteousness in all the relationships of life. Only in the manifestation of a Christlike spirit and character can men and nations sincerely affirm their belief in a righteous God.

If these considerations are valid, it is imperative that every man should strive to do right—a goal which he can never reach unless his heart is right. But since we learn to walk by walking and to think by thinking, the way to goodness is by doing good. Justification by faith upon which our forefathers placed such stress is the beginning and not the end of the process. To receive its benefits we must give our faith expression in action. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

One of the first steps to righteous conduct is a sense of responsibility. In varying degrees, according to our ancestry and upbringing, this is inherent in our na-

ture. But it must be nurtured if it is to grow, and the only way to nurture it is to practice the art of thinking of our great inheritance and the obligation it imposes upon us to pass it on, not only unimpaired, but also increased through our faithful trusteeship. It is obvious to any one who will reflect upon the subject for a moment that the generations who have toiled, struggled, and died, for a better world had a nobler motive than that we who are living now should dwell in ease and comfort. Righteousness is never self-regarding. Its springs are in the common welfare. No man has the slightest claim upon this title who does not feel that he has a definite duty to further the kingdom of God, as far as it lies within his power to do so.

This recognition of social responsibility implies an appreciation of the rights of others and has an immediate effect upon the character of those who experience it. It is the fulcrum for the Golden Rule. Why should we do to others as we would have them do to us, unless it is that personality is sacred because it is derived from God? No matter how firmly convinced we may be that our opinions are right, we are not justified in trying to force them upon others. Righteousness implies tolerance, sympathy, charity, patience, and generosity.

One of the most difficult of all spiritual exercises is to put one's self in another's place. It takes reason, imagination, and power of will to do so, but above all, it takes love. Even when the sincerest of men has done his best, he will fall far short of the ideal. Hence the necessity for constant watchfulness on our part, that we do not transgress the bounds of fairness in dealing with our fellows. Righteousness means much more than paying our bills and meeting our immediate

obligations. It means a vital interest in the kingdom of God, so that we may not overlook our duty toward the poor, the blind, and broken. In the emphasis that General Booth put upon "others" he was righteous, for he was revealing and mediating the spirit of Christ who is the righteousness of God. Canon Barnett in dedicating his life to the poor of London so unreservedly that he lived among them and shared their sorrows and limitations was righteous. He realized that in the struggle of centuries they had often been unfairly dealt with, that they suffered through the injustice and neglect of the ruling classes, and he gave himself to make such amends as lay within his power.

V

The practical question which confronts us is, How can we make righteousness an outstanding quality of our character? The answer lies in our establishing a right relationship with God. He is the source of all our strength, actual or potential. The secret of true worth is given in the divine command—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Every life has its main direction, its master passion. If we make pleasure, profit, power, or any other ephemeral value, our first aim, we cannot be righteous. What God requires of us is grounded in what he is. He is love, and righteousness is an aspect or emanation of love. No man can be righteous who does not love his fellows.

This, however, may seem to be an ideal impossible of attainment. How can we love those whom we have not seen or those who have treated us badly? How can we give up a considerable portion of our income

when no one asks us to do so, because we have a conviction that our profits have been larger than we can justify in relation to the service we have rendered? How can we work for reform, social, economic, or religious, when its coming will disturb our own comfort? How can we love truth more than our own opinions, and honor more than our material interests?

These are hard questions and they subject us to a severe test. Nor can we ever rise in our own strength to the standard of action they imply. Only when the spirit of God floods our hearts and carries away our native greed and pride can we reach those heights of conduct, which indicate that "righteousness and truth have kissed each other" in the inmost fountains of our being.

Perhaps a word of caution may not be amiss. Let no man be so foolish as to claim that he is righteous. We have divine authority for the truth that none is righteous except God himself. Even Jesus refused this sublime title. The backgrounds of life are so wide and deep that it is impossible to be sure that we are acting with thoroughgoing rectitude in any given circumstance, however strong our desire to do so. The Golden Rule is easily stated, but is applied with only the greatest difficulty. The teaching of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican is a perpetual warning against the assumption that we are righteous. The moment we believe ourselves to be so, we prove to the discerning that we are not. For righteousness is a plant which smothers in an atmosphere of pride, but thrives in an atmosphere of humility.

God alone is righteous. But as we strive to do his will, to think his thoughts after him, to work out his

purpose, to discover his truth, and to manifest his spirit by living Christlike lives, we become "partakers of the divine nature," and therefore in some degree reflect his righteousness because we have made it our own.

CHAPTER XII

GOD AS HOLINESS

I

The word holy has almost passed out of religious usage except in certain set phrases where it still survives, as for example in holy communion, holy baptism, and holy Bible. Most men would be both surprised and embarrassed to have it applied to them as a descriptive epithet. Yet it is one of the master words of the Old Testament and frequently occurs in the New, though in the latter its usage is generally confined to the phrase "Holy Ghost." Primarily it appertained only to God and indeed it can be said that the idea of holiness is essential to religion even apart from a clear notion of deity.

Historically its meaning is indefinite but it contains at least two elements which must be taken into careful account. The first of these is the idea of separateness, and the second that of purity. God is holy because he stands aloof from all that is evil, and is pure in the essence of his being. He is remote from every temporary interest and difficult of approach. He is to be feared because he is filled with a mysterious power which proceeds from him. If this power should enter into an ordinary man he would be surrounded by a circle of restrictions which would prevent him from discharging many of the duties of life. Hence men

feared to come into contact with any consecrated person or thing. Probably we have a shadowy survival of these taboos which are so frequent in the early Old Testament law in the sentiment which prevents a clergyman from engaging in activities that are looked upon as perfectly proper when performed by his people. Because of his ordination he is restrained from doing things that would otherwise be legitimate. A generation ago when a man made a profession of religion and united with the church, in many communities where the evangelical tradition was strong, he ceased immediately, as he was expected by public opinion to do, from such worldly amusements as dancing and card playing. His neighbors who had made no profession of faith could engage in these pastimes without particular comment, but bitter censure awaited the apostate who interpreted his Christian vows so loosely as to continue in the old ways.

II

While holiness as we have seen was primarily associated with deity, it is easy to see how in the primitive mind it soon passed over to things and persons. Whatever was associated with God became sacred. Sinai was the holy mountain. The altars where God was worshiped were holy and were invested with supernatural qualities. Heaven as the abode of God was particularly sacred and was even used as a substitute for the divine name. When the prodigal confessed that he had sinned against "Heaven" as well as in his father's sight we have an example of this usage.

Holiness was also ascribed to the vessels used in the sanctuary, even extending to the garments of the

priests. Survivals of this idea remain in the seriousness with which the clergy of some churches still argue about the proper form and fitness of the vestments in which they minister, as though fastidiousness in dress were essential to the doing of God's will.

One of the most striking illustrations of the extension of the idea of holiness is its application to certain portions of time. The various religious festivals took place at stated seasons which came to be regarded as sacred because of their associations. There were also the new moons and above all the Sabbath upon which every ordinary occupation ceased. This idea of the peculiar sanctity of every seventh day has been one of the most potent in history, and around it as the center has grown the church as one of the greatest of human institutions. The essential idea of the Sabbath among the Hebrews was its dedication to God. But it has had far more than a religious value. The physiological rejuvenation which it has achieved among the peoples who have observed it has given them a vigor lacking in those who had no such sanction to protect the laborer from the continuous exploitation of his employer. The leisure for reflection which it affords has also been a large factor in moral and intellectual progress. And though it is probably true that before God one section of time is not more sacred than another, the beneficial results of the Sabbath however artificially interpreted can scarcely be overestimated.

Holiness was also attributed to certain persons. Because of their nearness to God, the priests were peculiarly endowed with this quality. They were installed in office with elaborate rites, the purpose of which was to cleanse them for their sacred duties, with the exception of the anointing with oil which was doubtless done

in order to endow them with power. This is also the most probable explanation of the anointing of the king. Certain African tribes believe to-day that if a man is anointed with the fat of a lion he will be inspired with boldness and wild beasts will flee from him. At a later time when the Hebrew people grew restless under the formalism of the priestly ceremonies and the prophet arose, he was called a "man of God" in the belief that the divine spirit rested upon him. The phrase is still occasionally used by old-fashioned people in speaking of a clergyman, but it has been emptied of its meaning. Few of those who use it look with particular respect upon the person to whom it refers. It is a formal tribute or gesture.

This exposition of the ancient idea of holiness is necessary in order to show the background upon which the later and richer New Testament conception is built. From what has been said it is evident that for a long period it was construed in ceremonial terms. It consisted of external observances of the formal character rather than of matters of the spirit. For proof of this observation one has only to read the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and other passages of legal and ritualistic intent. Thus it tended to become more and more negative in its nature, and so far removed from everyday life as to be of only academic value to the average man.

Because of these observances involving their separation from other races, Israel was a holy people. Marriages with surrounding tribesmen were prohibited. But their superiority did not consist in higher ability or character. It was due to the self-protection afforded by their care in guarding against the pollution to which their neighbors were subject. But with the growth of

their analytical powers, stimulated by the obvious injustice of the old system, the keener minds among them began to examine these claims of superiority which had hitherto been unquestioned. They saw that while rites and ceremonies may have their place, the fundamental thing is the soul's purity and aloofness from worldly interests and motives. Hence the prophets denounced in strongest terms dependence upon sacrifices, sacred seasons, and outward observances in general. With profound conviction, clear vision, and in unmistakable terms, they laid the foundations for the formulation of the great principle—"by their fruits, ye shall know them," by showing the utter incongruity between special claims of divine favor on the one hand, and unjust conduct on the other. God was weary and troubled by the feasts of his people and refused to hear their prayers until they ceased from evil. But notwithstanding the sound common sense of the prophetic message, it fell largely on deaf ears. Legalism was too deeply entrenched to yield and so the ancient evils persisted with little abatement until the coming of Christ.

III

The New Testament idea of holiness continues and lifts to an even more exalted plane the most spiritual teaching of the Old Testament prophets and psalmists. And while many of the older terms are still used, such as altars, sprinkling, sacrifice, and oblation, these are given a new and richer significance. The emphasis is changed. Holiness passes from the outward to the inward; from the negative to the positive, from ceremonial purity to purity of intention. "Without holi-

ness no man shall see the Lord." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

It would be a mistake to assume that the Christian church, either at the beginning or in its subsequent development, has shaken itself free from the ancient taint of legalism and ceremonialism. These weaknesses are inherent in human nature which is always in danger of mistaking form for substance and appearance for reality. But there has been a steady growth toward the ideal, with increasing freedom from external restraints. More and more men of every type are realizing that the fountain-head of all our troubles is the heart. Only when that is pure will mankind be free from the rule of sin and death. No plan for the welfare of the world will ever work which ignores this fundamental law. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Nor is Christian holiness a passive quality. On the contrary it is an energizing, self-preserving principle issuing from the heart of God. Purity is not enough. The clearest water in a pool becomes impure if it is stagnant. Action alone conserves health—a word which springs from the same root as holy. The only way to overcome evil is to put good in its place. The blunder of the Puritan lay in his negative austerities. These were often majestic when exhibited in men of caliber who offset their rigidity by beauty of conduct, but in lesser men they degenerated into irritating marks of spiritual snobbishness or pharisaism.

IV

To the man who has entered into the meaning of the Christian gospel, there is an absolute revelation of the

holiness of God. Nor is it to be found in any portion of space or time or material thing however rich in its associations. Personality alone is sacred. Personality alone makes place. "The Lord shall count when he writeth up his people that this man was born there." We think of Jerusalem as the Holy City, not because of any inherent qualities with which it is invested, but because it is so intimately associated with the noble personalities of a far-off day, and because during his earthly life Jesus of Nazareth walked its streets and ministered to those who received his offer of a more abundant life here, and life eternal hereafter.

It is even by a figure of speech that we call the Bible holy, for holiness is a personal quality imparted to man from God. Our clearest assurance of God's holy character is based upon our knowledge of Christ. If this approach can be kept in mind most of the misunderstandings which result in bitter controversies and unhappy divisions within the church will be banished forever. When men engage in disputes over such questions as the inspiration of Scripture, the number of the sacraments and the right form of their celebration, and seek to exclude those of the opposite view from the church, they are making the blunder of their ancient forbears who believed that holiness was achieved through ceremonial activities of a formal nature. The moral glory of God's holiness is to be discovered only in Christ, first in his life of self-renouncing service and secondly in his sacrificial death upon the cross. Alike in his life and his death, Christ was separate from the ordinary ephemeral motives which corrupt our human nature when not held in the leash of a balanced restraint, and by his complete dedication to the Father's will his absolute purity was both established and con-

served. His holiness generates and guarantees the holiness of his followers. "Both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." He is the vine and they are the branches, whose chief function is to bear fruit in accordance with the essential nature of the vine. The one incontrovertible proof of their relation to him is shown in the fruit they bear. If it is joy, love, peace, patience, and generosity, they are truly his.

This vital bond which unites Christ and his followers is the one sure prophylactic against sin. Not only does it separate the soul from the world but it ensures a constant flow of power from God, for "Christ is the power of God unto salvation," enabling its possessor to retain his purity even amidst the most impure conditions. The best protection against disease is health, and the surest guard against temptation is a motive of sustained purity. Not by fleeing from the world do men achieve holiness but by living in and yet above the world.

v

Since holiness consists of moral likeness to God, and God is supremely revealed in Christ, the way to a pure and noble character is to be found in following Christ's example. Like him we must be ready to do the will of God, even though it involves sacrifices that seem too cruel to bear. Strength is always given to the man who is true to the light he has and though sometimes obedience leads to fanaticism, on the whole such mistakes are minor in character in comparison to those which are the outcome of indifference to or wanton disregard of the divine will.

Again Christ demonstrated in his life not only the possibility but desirability of perfect purity. It should also be remembered that he gave the idea a richness of content which we are prone to overlook. Of course in his thought and conduct, purity involves abstinence from physical self-indulgence. But he did not emphasize sins of the flesh by giving them a large place in his censures. He took their evil for granted, but he did not stop there. It is a common mistake to think that avoidance of the cruder immoralities is a proof of a worthy character. In fact it is only the beginning. Purity means sincerity of motive, freedom from self-righteousness, and an honest desire for the truth. How often in an argument in the clash of contending opinions, the mind is deflected from the truth by the desire for personal triumph! A noted lawyer has recently stated that in a long experience at the bar he has known only two men who willingly testified against their own interests. Even in debates over religion, where we should expect that men would be earnest in the desire to find the true way, we are forced to the reluctant conclusion that the deeper motive is to win votes rather than to persuade their erring brethren by the power and beauty of truth. In the teaching and example of Christ this taint never appears. Here we have the explanation of his tolerance. He never tried to force his opinions upon others. He never appealed to the baser instincts of the crowd, but always tried to lead his disciples into an appreciation of truth by showing its inherent reasonableness.

One of the essential elements of Christian character is an honest effort to eliminate from the soul every motive which tends to becloud its vision. Pride, jealousy, worldliness, avarice, partisanship, spiritual laziness, are

qualities directly opposed to and destructive of holiness. It is as necessary that they be expunged from the mind as cruder sins of lying or vice. Christ is worthy of the title "holy" because these corrupting elements had no place in his life. But immunity from them can not be secured on easy terms. It takes effort to purify the soul. Just as sulphur and other injurious elements in iron can be expelled only by intense heat supplemented by the hard labor of the puddler as he is called, who works over the retort filled with the molten metal and by his labor and skill transforms it into steel, so holiness can be achieved only in the fires of a great conviction for truth and righteousness, which burn the dross out of the soul, releasing its energies from the slavery of the flesh and concentrating them upon the service of God.

The climax of holiness is the cross of Christ. Only love in its purest and intensest form, coupled with complete separation from all that savors of worldliness, could have fortified him to endure this humiliation, pain, and apparent defeat. Only direct contact with the power of the ever-living God can furnish an adequate explanation for such love, given as it was to those who rejected him and put him to death. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" marks the highest spiritual achievement of the human race and establishes a standard that can never be surpassed.

But the cross of Christ is not detached from man's daily experience. It is not confined to a single place or time. It is rather a perfect demonstration of a principle that is as wide as eternity itself. It is the supreme mark and inviolable proof of holiness and is as active and necessary in one age as in another. "If any man would serve me, let him deny himself and

take up his cross and follow me." Men must be partakers of Christ's sufferings if they would be partakers of his glory. He alone who has suffered and is ready to suffer to further the cause of righteousness has entered into the divine inheritance and if he has had this most exalted of all experiences, he is holy, because he is in communion with God.

CHAPTER XIII

GOD AS LOVE

I

The all important question with which every man of religious outlook is confronted is the character of God. We may disregard the argument of those who claim that they disbelieve in his existence. Such men are few, and often those who are popularly supposed to take this position have been misrepresented. Most of us were brought up in the tradition that Voltaire was an infidel, a word which has happily passed out of use except in a few belated instances. But visitors to Ferney may still read over the door of the little parish church—"Deo erexit Voltaire." This dedication was to avoid all reference to any saint or intermediary between man and his maker. Most of the men who have been accused of being atheists have only denied their belief in certain dogmas that were regarded as essential by their contemporaries. What they refused to accept was the prevalent conception of God, and not God himself.

But it does not carry us far enough to affirm our belief in God. What is his attitude toward us? Is he utterly impersonal in his relations to his children, who share his thought in at least a modest degree, having no more care for man than for the beasts of the field? If this be true, our future has little in it to engender hope, for unless there can be communion with him of

such a kind as to assure us of his interest in us, life is robbed of all real zest.

In the Old Testament there are various references to the love of God, but they hold only a minor place in its thought. Its emphasis is upon his holiness and righteousness and even where God's loving care becomes explicit, as in Hosea's parallel between his forgiveness of his erring wife and God's compassion upon his sinful children, his thought is restricted to Israel. There is no suggestion of the extension of that love to the gentile world.

In passing to the New Testament we find an altogether different outlook. While in the gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, Jesus had little to say directly of the love of God, that love is nevertheless implicitly taught in the idea of fatherhood, which forms the warp of all his teaching. However, the idea becomes explicit in the writings of St. John where it is definitely affirmed that God is love. Here love is set forth as the essence of the divine character. It is not an attribute of God, but the central reality of his being in which such qualities as justice, holiness, and mercy, are born. If our minds could be satisfied without investigation, it would not be necessary to consider the subject further. But as a matter of fact, in experience we are always looking for confirmation of the statements which have been received upon authority. Our restless minds seek to test the truth we have inherited, to make sure we are not relying upon an illusion. And while there are many devout persons who are content to accept the Bible at its face value, there are multitudes who are unable to do so unless it can be shown that its affirmations can be confirmed by experience. Even those who claim to believe in its abso-

lute inerrancy are as eager to find support of its statements in archæology, history, or science, as are their less dogmatic neighbors.

II

When we turn to nature and ask for her testimony as to whether God is love, we find ourselves listening to two voices. This would be confusing in any circumstances but it is particularly so when we recall that nature is so much nearer to us than any book, however sacred or venerable. For nature is with us all the time, both without and within. She is our theater of action, our mother, our teacher, and our home, so that we would be blind and foolish to disregard her answer to any question upon which she is able to throw light.

On our first approach she seems to hold out little hope of an affirmative reply, when we ask her whether God loves us. Here is a peaceful meadow with the bobolinks and larks singing in exuberant joy. But underneath the apparent serenity a continual warfare goes on. These happy birds are in constant danger and may become the victims of a hawk at any moment. Often their nests are despoiled. In walking across the flower-carpeted field, what tragedies we thoughtlessly cause, when many a quiet home is disturbed by our ruthless feet! Within the shadows of the grass and flower there is a constant drama of life and death. The spider pounces upon the grasshopper who falls into his net. The robin preys upon the worm, the swallow upon the fly, and so on throughout the entire gamut of life from its lowest to its highest forms. The confusing problem raised by these considerations found classic expression in Blake's remarkable poem:

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry? ¹

Yet this is not all of nature's testimony. There is love within her heart. One of my earliest and happiest recollections is that of finding the nest of a ground sparrow, or nighthawk, and allowing the mother bird to lure me away from the sacred spot by pretending that her wing was broken so that she could not fly and

¹ William Blake, "The Tiger."

was just able to keep out of my reach. She always looked the picture of misery though she grew stronger the farther we got away from the nest, until, when she felt that all was safe she rose into the air with a defiant look as much as to say "I fooled you," and returned to her work of ministering to her young. Whence came this love save from the heart of God himself?

Hunters of big game have often told of the sacrificial impulse which prompts a buck to return to the very spot where his mate fell a victim to a rifle bullet, only to be shot down. Love, however blind or unreasoning it may be, is the only explanation of such conduct. The same principle is exhibited in the close coöperation among gregarious animals as when sentries are detailed to watch for signs of danger. A tigress is always fiercest when her young are attacked. She seems to love her cubs with all the intensity of a human mother. But perhaps nature apart from man reaches her climax in the love of the dog for his master and his household. It is unnecessary to recount any of the dramatic episodes which have proved beyond a doubt that the dog is capable of a sacrificial affection. Thus even in nature there is an urge which often finds expression in a spiritual quality obviously akin to what we call love in our human relations.

III

When we pass upward from the animal world to man, we discover many of the characteristics which are dominant in the lower orders of being. In primitive communities every stranger is looked upon as a potential enemy. The early tribesmen spent much of their time in fighting their neighbors. In the backward com-

munities of civilization there are still blood feuds in which murder is frequent. The late W. H. Hudson has described a fierce combat between two insects which stirred sad feelings in his mind. One fly seized another of an allied species in the air and when they dropped to the ground "plunged his rostrum like a dagger into the soft part of the victim's body. Again and again he raised and buried his weapon in the other. . . . I had seen just such a combat between two men, one fallen and the other on him, raising and striking down with his knife. Had I never witnessed such an incident, the two flies struggling, one killing the other, would have produced no such feeling, and would not have been remembered." ²

But it is not alone on the remote Argentine pampas that man wars against his fellows. The lynching of negroes by white Americans, the slaughter of Koreans by the Japanese, the hysteria which throws men into prison because they are Communists and foreigners, the bitter controversies over theological questions, the fierce conflicts between class and class—all these suggest the prevalence of hate rather than love in human nature. There is much to confirm this pessimistic conclusion in the place that war holds in international relations. The morality of governments is almost entirely self-regarding. They think only of their own interests. Notwithstanding the hostile criticism he evoked, the Earl of Birkenhead expressed a widespread belief when in his rectorial address at the University of Glasgow, in November 1923, he said that "idealism in national affairs is not merely impracticable, but may easily degenerate into a deadly source of national peril."

These are the facts that the pacifist with his wealth

² "Hampshire Days," E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1923.

of sentiment is prone to overlook. The forces which contend in nature are present in the warp and woof of human society. War between nations will continue until greed and hate are eliminated from the hearts of the people who make up the life of nations, for war is a symptom of an underlying disease. But the fact that such a spirit which breaks out in murderous strife exists on so wide a scale is a barrier to an easy faith in the love of God. For surely, if God loves his children, it would seem reasonable that they will reflect his love in their attitude toward one another.

IV

Here again, as in the case of nature, the whole story has not been told. Mankind also bears a dual witness. While it is true that there is hatred, competition, and conflict, in human society, happily there are other qualities as well. Even in the midst of hostility and conflict there is a great remedial principle at work striving with ceaseless effort to replace discord with harmony. This inner urge is love which is often crushed, bleeding, and broken, but never is defeated. Its primary theater is the home where the father, mother, and children are bound together in a sacrificial commonwealth. From the home it reaches out to the community and embraces with some degree of tenacity those of kindred mind and purpose. Yet it does not stop here. It is never satisfied with its own. Always there is an implicit outreaching for others. When the deeps of the human soul are stirred, it becomes capable of heroic action. How often in the Great War men willingly gave their lives in the attempt to rescue wounded but unknown comrades from "no-man's land." Sometimes

those who made the supreme sacrifice were men of uncertain standing who had previously displayed little character, or even bore the stigmata of crime. But at the critical moment they displayed that nobility of temper which atones for a multitude of sins: "Greater love hath no man than this."

Nor is it alone in times of high emotion, that love for others becomes the dominant passion. There is the long roll of missionaries who gave their lives in the steady endeavor to plant the refining and redeeming truths of the Christian gospel in the hearts of far-off peoples, amid untold difficulties. How can we explain the conduct of such a man as Dr. Shelton of Tibet, who a year or two ago lost his life because he was in the line of fire in a feud between Mongolian and Tibetan tribesmen? Why should he have left his native country and taken his wife to such a remote place and to such uncouth surroundings, to minister to sick and lame and blind and ignorant folk who did not ask for his services and often would not thank him when they were rendered? Love is the only answer.

It is also the explanation of the philanthropist. All the great reformers of history have been driven by an inward impulse which, however they themselves would account for it, is simply love seeking to find expression. Mrs. Humphry Ward is popularly remembered as a writer but it is a safe prediction that when "the books are opened" her literary creations will be a minor factor in her achievement. Her real reward in the esteem of posterity will be given on the basis of her passionate love for the poor of London, the love which prompted her to burn out her life in the founding of University Hall, the Passmore Edwards' Settlement, the establishment of schools for physically defective

children, and of play centers to save the swarming boys and girls from the evil tuition of the streets. Why should a busy woman, with a large circle of congenial friends, who was doing a great work in her writing, spend such long fatiguing hours for the poor and the outcast? Love again is the answer—the great unifying principle which sends the laborer out to work for his wife and children, the physician to risk the contagion of disease among lepers, and the missionary to die at his post amid Mongolian wastes, tropic jungles, or Arctic snows. Love is indeed the greatest thing in the world, and though often it seems to speak with uncertain voice, and to work on too narrow a field, that is due to the fact that the intractable material of which our human nature is composed must be mellowed and refined by long processes of discipline to become a perfect vehicle of the divine spirit which unites man to God and makes him one with him in heart and purpose.

V

It is a well established principle of literary or artistic criticism that a worker is entitled to be judged by his best rather than by his worst achievements. An artist who has painted a thousand pictures is justified in asking that his claim to honor be decided upon his successes rather than his failures. A dozen good pictures from his brush outweigh a hundred of his mediocre productions which represent the primary steps he had to take before his talent found adequate expression. In this principle we have the key to the question, which in some of our moods appears to be insoluble, as to whether God loves us or not. Upon no other ground than the divine character can we explain the noble

heights of sacrifice reached by a multitude of heroic souls. Their love can only be explained as a reflex of divine love, and it is also a prophecy of the day when their spirit and achievement will be universal.

But this is not all. We have still another approach to the character of God. If we would learn what he is we have our answer in Christ who first taught with clear emphasis that he is our Father, and nearly always used this word to describe him. Hitherto, as we have seen, fatherhood had been conceived, though only on rare occasions, as one of several of the divine attributes. However, it is not the teaching of Christ that is of greatest importance. His uniqueness lies in the fact that he lived what he taught. The truth he proclaimed became incandescent in his own person. Whoever looked upon him looked upon the Father, because they are one in mind and heart.

This remarkable claim is confirmed by the supreme place that love holds alike in his teaching and his life. He was rejected by his own people, but he did not reject them. Wherever he went he offered the gift of a more abundant life. He told his disciples to love their enemies and to do good to them, even as he did himself. His two commandments spring from the same root; men should love God with all their strength of mind and heart, and their neighbors as themselves. In our relations with others, we are to do to them what we would have them do to us, if our situations were reversed. No sane man can quarrel with this ideal. He may argue that it is impractical, though he can not deny that if it could be established, it would solve every problem. But Christ believed that it can be established, because he lived it himself. His life is therefore a prophecy of the ultimate realization of his ideal.

When we are told that God is love, we have an abstraction which Christ made concrete. He is the fact which both explains and proves the affirmation. The divine character is revealed in his life dedicated to the service of his fellow men as he came into contact with them immediately, and through his prophetic vision, as he established the foundations of the heavenly kingdom and indicated the lines of its growth through future ages. But the climax of his love is the cross. His hold upon the thought and imagination of the world is directly traceable to the spirit of sacrifice which he exemplified in so unique a degree that in his immeasurable love we know that we have the key to the character of God.

In the light of these considerations we may reasonably rest in the assurance that we are the objects of God's loving care, no matter what our circumstances are. Of course we must bear in mind in our pains, griefs, and disappointments, that we see only through a glass and darkly. We live in an ocean of mystery. But though a child may doubt a parent's love when some object of his desire is withheld, yet will afterwards see that the denial was a proof of true affection, so we should have imagination enough to go on in faith through every vicissitude, realizing that in the pain we suffer God suffers with us, and tempers us to rule our souls and to take our places in the eternal kingdom of his love.

VI

God loves the world that he has brought into being, and in its structure all things are working together toward the fulfillment of his love. Patriotism is one form

that it takes. The love of the citizen for his country makes national life possible. Science is still another form of love, because while seeming detached and impersonal it is born only through the love of truth on the part of its devotees. All progress in knowledge is dependent upon love. This is also the secret of the artist's power. Because he loves beauty in form, color, or sound, he throws a heavenly radiance around the commonplace experiences of daily life. The ultimate ground of all great achievement and adventure is love. This is the explanation alike of the incarnation and the cross. Christ is simply love incarnate, love for righteousness, justice, holiness, truth; love for a suffering, sinful, sorrowing world; love which impelled him to die that men should live. He calls us to join him in that love. The measure of our worth is the measure of our love, for it reveals our character by showing how far we have responded to the overtures of God.

CHAPTER XIV

GOD AS MERCY

I

That mercy is an attribute of the divine character is an almost universal element in religious belief. Here Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and other alien faiths unite with Judaism and Christianity. Probably this conviction reaches its highest practical expression among some of the peoples of India where it has been carried to such extremes that even noxious creatures may not be destroyed. Among non-Christians, a merciful spirit toward the poor and the unfortunate of mankind attains its highest development in the Parsis, whose wealthy members display a wholehearted generosity toward the less favored members of their faith. Their numbers are too small, however, to enable them to exercise a wide influence in a land where the caste system holds a controlling place in the human relationships of millions, and nullifies a beautiful sentiment which otherwise would have scope for widespread application.

In the earlier stages of human history there was not much opportunity for the cultivation of mercy. Religious pride, social or tribal prejudice, suspicion, lack of imagination, and other divisive factors, promoted the growth of hostility and dislike toward the stranger. Then too, in primitive religion where animal sacrifices were enjoined, familiarity with the taking of life tended

both to deaden sensibility and to bring out the harsher qualities of human nature. Since to lose a fight was usually tantamount to losing life, the kindlier feelings had little chance for growth. Such facts account for the bitterness and cruelty so often revealed in the earlier portions of the Old Testament, where Jehovah is said to have commanded the slaughter of the innocent women and children and even the animals of the enemy, not to mention their warriors who were ruthlessly put to the sword.

II

In popular thought, mercy is often confused with love, sympathy, or pity, and though it is closely allied to these ideas, it contains one factor which differentiates it completely from them. This distinguishing element is superiority. Mercy is never a relationship between equals, and is for that reason a quality or attribute in which God is peculiarly revealed. For this reason the growth of mercy has coincided with the growth of tolerance and liberty. Love and sympathy can flourish within a narrow group that is hostile to all others, but mercy has little or no meaning until it overflows every barrier of sect, clan, or race. The mercy of God, mediated through those who know his will and have entered into his spirit and purpose, recognizes no limitations upon its potential beneficiaries. A penitent heart is the only condition to be met before every man is eligible to receive this heavenly favor.

Some of the outstanding marks of God's mercy are a tender compassion for man, a kindly disposition toward him in his frailty and need, and consistency in treating him with loving forbearance. Many of the

earlier ideas of God as they are set forth in the Old Testament represent him as a capricious despot—"I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." But eventually a clearer idea of the divine character evolved, and the foundation was laid for the universal outlook of the New Testament. Slowly but inevitably men grew in mind and vision, until they understood that God is no respecter of persons; his mercy is bestowed without favor upon all who turn to him in their need. The book of Jonah, which was for so long the battle-ground of the literalist and skeptic that its wonderful richness of meaning was lost, is a satire, the original purpose of which was to bring home to the bigots of Israel the fact of God's mercy upon the pagan children of the Ninevites, and also upon their cattle. It was a daring truth for the prophet to enunciate, and one which still requires proclamation. There are few ideas more difficult for the unspiritualized mind to grasp than the fact that God looks with equal favor upon us and those who differ from us, in race, color, or faith. His merciful heart embraces the Japanese as readily and as inclusively as it embraces the Anglo-Saxon; his compassion extends to the starving babies of Russia and Germany with the same yearning affection that it holds for those of the most favored nation.

III

From these considerations it is evident that the idea of mercy is of comparatively late origin. Man had to undergo a long discipline, and to reach a considerable degree of refinement and imagination, before he could appreciate the value of this divine quality. Its conception marks a relatively high state of culture and was

an essential preliminary to the idea of one God. Only as men began to realize the impossibility of rival deities ruling over separate areas of the earth were they prepared for the suggestion that their God could be interested in those in whom they were not interested, or whose welfare was in conflict with theirs.

The definite and explicit statement of this truth is clearly set forth in the gospels. Here all the foregleams which appear in the Old Testament come to a focal point in Christ. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." The parable of the prodigal son is a dramatic presentation of the Everlasting Mercy. With exquisite art the Father is described as always ready to receive his erring children without recrimination, though not without punishment, for the wanderer suffered severely when he sank to the lowly estate of a swineherd in a distant land.

Forgiveness is the active presentation of mercy—the restoration of a broken relationship. The climax of mercy is therefore reached in the first words of Jesus from the cross—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The divine attitude toward mankind finds its perfect expression in this prayer. For Jesus was not thinking of the Roman soldiers who were putting him to death. He knew that they were only the agents of the malign forces that were bent upon his destruction. He understood perfectly the political weakness which yielded to the clamor of the mob and the cruel hostility of the leaders of the Jewish church who feared the loss of their privileges because they were too inflexible in disposition to adjust themselves to the new standards of life implicit in his teachings. This clear perception of the motives of his

enemies enabled him to sympathize with them. Ignorance was at the bottom of their malice toward him; most of them never had an opportunity to be other than they were. His mercy was grounded in his sense of justice and his compassion, because he knew how eagerly they would have received him, if they had but understood.

Many a volume has been written in the effort to explain the rejection of Jesus; yet rarely has any historic insight been shown in dealing with the problem. Multitudes of devout Christians have wondered why the people of his day were so lacking in sensibility that they failed to recognize him. Floods of emotion have been spent in imagining how glorious it would have been to have lived in Nazareth when he was working there, or to have been in the inner circle at Jerusalem:

I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with them then.¹

But we are safe in saying that every one who thinks in such terms would have been numbered with those who rejected Jesus. It takes prophetic insight to recognize a prophet and, in any age, those with this gift are almost as few as the prophets. Jesus must have realized the impossibility of receiving the appreciation of his generation. Hence he was not disappointed; he was content to build his life into the fabric of the future and though it would have given him joy to have been assured that his fellow countrymen understood his purpose, his immediate reward was vested in his faith

¹ Mrs. Jemima Luke.

that the kingdom of heaven would eventually be realized in sufficient degree to justify his sacrifice. He did not condemn his detractors and persecutors as they could not possibly have understood his vision.

So it has always been. One generation stones its prophets, while another raises monuments to them. He who would be a pioneer in thought must pay the price by accepting without a murmur the misunderstandings of his contemporaries. They will brand him with ugly names; they will misconstrue his motives; they will blame him for the ills they have brought upon themselves by their own stupidity and incompetence. Yet he must keep his spirit free from every taint of bitterness. If he is unable to do this, he is unfitted for the rôle of the prophet. This is where Nietzsche failed and Tolstoy succeeded. The "visioner of a better day," to borrow a phrase from Francis Thompson, must have a merciful heart. To despise the crowd because of its many shortcomings issuing in the failure to understand the prophetic message is fatal to success. Mercy is always an element of greatness; of this Lincoln is a shining example. It is patient, far-sighted, and long-suffering.

IV

The man who is merciful is an agent of God for the mediation of the divine gift of forgiveness. Thus he who would obtain mercy must be ready to extend it to others. If it is to keep its vitality, mercy must be active; otherwise it stagnates. No aspect of man's co-partnership with God is one-sided. If any one tries to hold the divine gifts for himself, they lose their virtue in his grip. The effort to retain them is as sure

to end in defeat as was that of King Midas with his golden touch.

This is the teaching of Jesus in the parable of the unmerciful servant. The master's forgiveness was withdrawn because this man who had received so much did not transmit a small portion of his unmerited bounty to the man who was only slightly in his debt. Thus when the sinner experiences the joy of heavenly forgiveness, if his soul is healthy, he will find delight in forgiving others until the spirit of mutual forbearance is everywhere regnant.

This must not be regarded as a plea of sentimentality. Forgiveness always takes account of the welfare of the offender, rather than of the outraged feelings of him against whom the offense has been committed. Yet in the transaction the spiritual stature of the person extending mercy is always increased. The dear old bishop in "*Les Misérables*" exercises a radiant influence upon every reader of that noble book because of his Christlike spirit in showing mercy to Jean Valjean in circumstances in which he would have been legally and morally justified in committing him to the relentless control of the law.

One of the world's most fundamental needs is a larger measure of mercy in the relations of men. Forgiveness is a most difficult virtue to practice. The natural thing to do is to strike back when we are struck; to call the policeman, to answer every injustice in kind. Yet the entire weight of testimony in the Christian evangel stands against this course. Nothing stiffens opposition like opposition; nothing melts it down like mercy. Most of the friction due to racial, religious, and other antagonisms, would fade away if those in the superior position in the controversy would cultivate a

merciful spirit. Deep in the heart of mankind there is a desire to do right and an attitude that responds to kindness. And though it seems quixotic to the legalist to risk his interests upon so shaky a foundation, generosity of spirit succeeds more often than it fails. What government ever collapsed because it yielded to the demand for a larger justice on the part of any of the minority groups within the commonwealth? Rebellions and revolutions have always been the outcome of a rankling sense of injustice in the hearts of minorities that often grew into majorities. And even when a rigorous demand for justice untempered with mercy appears to be successful, it only postpones the day of reckoning. An unmerciful attitude has a doubly bad effect; it hardens the heart of those who hold it, and inflames the passions of those who suffer from it. The history of Ireland illustrates this law of life. Because General Smuts saw this more clearly than most of those who took part with him in the Council of Versailles, he made his noble plea for a greater leniency toward the defeated nations. History has already vindicated him for the final record always justifies the principle of mercy.

Perhaps the explanation of the stubbornness, with which so many Christian leaders cling to the outworn idea that true religion is doctrine rather than life, is to be found in the difficulty of living in harmony with the most exalted standards that they know. Most people find it easy to say—"I believe"; but extremely difficult to forgive those who have used them badly. Mercy is an act of faith. Not only does it run counter to native inclination and prejudice, but it demands high spiritual courage. Yet in the face of all the dangers and difficulties it suggests, it pays high dividends in in-

creased spiritual power. An outstanding example is the influence of Socrates. His benignity toward his enemies has inspired multitudes through nearly a thousand generations. But the supreme example is Jesus of Nazareth whose place in the affections of the race, redemptive power, and ceaseless and increasing influence, would all have been impossible were it not for the Everlasting Mercy which in him became incarnate. Christ on the one side—Mohammed or Napoleon on the other—the instincts of the human heart never hesitate when this choice is put before them. Mercy carries an inner witness which in the long run dissolves all opposition toward those who grant it.

Once when the army of Napoleon was crossing the Alps, a bugler, who was a mere boy, slipped from the road to a ledge far below the line of travel. He blew a call of distress on his bugle and an officer halted the march to try to effect a rescue. Napoleon, happening to come along, impatiently asked the reason for the delay. On being told, he ordered the army to proceed. He could not allow the life of a common soldier to retard his purpose for a moment, and so the poor boy was left to blow his own requiem as the army passed on.

No contrast could be sharper than that between the character revealed in the heartless impatience of this act and the character of Jesus. To him the humblest life was worthy of all possible aid, because every man is a child of God. Thus he was merciful toward the woman who was a sinner, though her life was forfeit according to the law. His forgiveness took full account of the evil influences beyond her control that had tended to make her what she was, and also of her future good. This is the attitude of God toward man, and it is the responsibility of those who have experienced the divine

mercy to extend this gift to all mankind. The fundamental motive of the missionary is not response to an external command, but mercy reaching out across the sea to the benighted, the superstitious, the cruel, the poor, and unknown, in their hunger of soul. The day will arrive when, as the Psalmist foresaw, "mercy shall be built up forever" in the commonwealth of loving forbearance, where none will deal harshly with his neighbor. The spirit of Napoleon must give place to the spirit of Christ.

CHAPTER XV

GOD AS GRACE

I

Every one is familiar with changes of fashion in dress. Apparently without reason, and without intimation from any quarter, new modes appear and before we realize it we are striving to adjust ourselves to the new conditions which like the wind come from we know not where. This is also true of the language in which we clothe our thought. It is in constant process of change. If we were unfamiliar with the King James version of the Bible and should hear it read for the first time, its noblest passages would sound quaint and remote from both the speech and experience of daily life. This explains our need of new translations of the Bible from time to time. As certain forms of expression pass out of use, it is necessary to find their equivalents in the language of the day.

A striking illustration of this decay of words is found in the phrase, "the grace of God," which was much in vogue in the language of our forbears and until a generation or so ago. Probably it was used so frequently that it lost its flavor. Perhaps it was worn threadbare by unctuous usage so that men of sensitive temper refrained from using it out of reverence for its great truth. However that may be, it is scarcely heard any longer excepting in formal benediction. But

whatever the reason, we can ill afford to give it up, because of its rich associations and more particularly because it covers in a simple and definite way the greatest truth of religion. A recognition of this prompted the late Dr. P. T. Forsyth to declare some years before his death, that we need to restore the word "grace" to modern preaching, but it is obvious that more than the restoration of a word is needed. What we require is a fresh and vital experience of the reality for which the word stands, which, as we shall see, is God's infinite mercy and loving-kindness going out actively toward every one of his children entirely apart from any merit or demerit of theirs.

Grace is preëminently a Biblical word and though its fullest meaning is reached only in the New Testament, there is a definite overture to it in the Old, where the idea is covered by two words, one of which means the favor, and the other, the loving-kindness of God. Religion in the true sense would be impossible apart from this belief in God's merciful protection and interest. All the great doctrines of the Christian gospel are found in one form or another in the religion of the Jews, but with this profound difference that the promised blessings of the latter are confined to the children of Israel, whereas in the New Testament they are made universal. Thus the New Testament idea of grace is both mellower and richer than that of the Old. It carries the idea of unconditioned beneficence. Nothing that the recipient has done or can do is essential to its manifestation. No matter how unworthy a man is, he is still an object of the divine grace which is love in its free, self-imparted, and unpurchased aspect.

II

Baron von Hügel has used the word "givenness" to express the essential quality of grace. God reaches out for man and dowers him with his gifts and draws him toward himself. His greatest delight is found in man's appreciation of the opportunities he has bestowed upon him. A little reflection will show how narrow is the range of our own unaided achievement, if indeed it exists at all. We had no choice of our birth either in its place or time. For aught that we did or could do, we might as well have been born Hottentots or Mohammedans. Our parents were given to us and also the talents which we inherited through them. Over these talents they had no control. The line of life was carried through them. That was all. Whether the child is musical or mathematical, a dullard or a genius, depends upon a shaping force beyond human power to determine or control.

The same is true of the environment in which the infant's palpitating body is placed for its development. The earth is its home, or rather the universe, but the vainest of men would make no claim to having a part in the creation. That also is given. Fields and mountains, clouds and oceans, sun and stars, and also his spiritual inheritance, in the shape of manners, customs, and culture, all await the opening mind of the child. Their light falls upon him. Their mystic suggestions enter into his soul and draw out its latent capacities. His education is the process of learning to interpret the meaning of the world which was ready for him when first he opened his eyes in wonder.

But the objection may be raised that, when the child becomes a man, he has the power to decide his own

destiny. By exercise of his will he can break down the barriers in his path and rise above his natural level. Through rigorous application, he can overcome the handicaps of birth and leave many of his fellows far behind who perhaps started with advantages much superior to his. But, here again, the fact of givenness appears and warns us against self-esteem. Whence comes this ambition, this intrinsic strength, which enables its possessor to climb the heights? It is also the gift of God, for man can neither create it in himself nor can he cut the channels in his personality through which it flows to turn the wheels of achievement.

Thus it is largely beside the mark to suggest to a poor youth that he can follow in the footsteps of Lincoln as the rhetorician so often advises. One might as well hold out the hope that every budding poet can become a Shakespeare; or every callow thinker, a Socrates. The power of persistence in the face of handicap is no less a part of what God has given to a man than the color of his eyes. And though there must be a region of non-interference, in which we work out our own destiny, it is much more restricted than we realize. The margins of human choice are narrow. Under other circumstances or with a different initial equipment, the good man would be a scoundrel or vice versa.

III

It is a commonplace of religious faith to affirm that the culmination of God's beneficence is Jesus Christ, who is "full of grace and truth." Multitudinous though God's gifts to us, the gift of gifts is Christ. Nor is the reason remote nor abstract. There is no occasion

whatever for argument as to the way in which this supreme manifestation of the grace of God operates. The best explanations can only be provisional. No graver blunder can be made than to rest in the conviction that we have found a final explanation of the person or work of Christ. The difficulty lies in the many unseen factors which we can never discover. Hence it is futile to argue that this or that theory of the atonement is essential to true faith. It is not necessary to understand the principles of physiology in order to have a good digestion: a man may experience the grace of God without having an explanation to offer as to the way it operates.

However, this does not indicate that we are in the dark as to the meaning of the gift of Christ. He stands before the world as its supreme exemplar. He shows the way to salvation to all who follow him. For in every man there are wonderful potencies which only await the right stimulus to draw them out and give them expression in action. Here they take on a requisite wholeness of good character. In a word, this is the meaning of salvation which we are told is brought by "the grace of God." Both in his life and in his death, and in his present power, Christ is God's free offering to mankind, sharing their human nature that men may take on the virtues of heart and mind which are manifested in him. While we cannot reach the heights attained by Christ, our lives can move in the same direction and be animated by his spirit. That is salvation, emancipation from the control of the perishable elements in our nature, bringing it under the direction of those elements which are imperishable. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." "The mortal must therefore put on immortality." Such

is the purpose of life which is a constant struggle between the physical and the spiritual, and only by the grace of God can the spiritual become victorious. Modern biology confirms this conclusion. Whatever the mistakes and exaggerations of Calvinism, it was right in its recognition that the men who achieve moral distinction do so because of their belief in their divine election or assurance of the love of God freely given without merit on their part.

IV

One remarkable result of the experience of the grace of God is a sense of power. The strength of St. Paul is due in no small measure to his assurance that he was a recipient of the divine favor. He went up and down the world of his day overcoming insuperable obstacles, beating down the bitter opposition of those who should have been his friends, and risking death in a hundred ways, in order to share with others his experience of salvation. This was the theme of all his preaching. "By the grace of God, I am what I am." He proclaimed his message with passion and power because of his conviction that God had freely bestowed upon him the gift of eternal life as it had been manifested in Christ.

Centuries after Martin Luther fired the world with a simple story born of his own experience. His proclamation was the truth that God freely forgives the penitent soul. His words swept like a prairie fire over Europe because they came from the intense conviction that his sins had been forgiven. Only the grace of God can blot out man's transgressions when the soul has been marred by the degrading application of its

powers to selfish or base purposes. What a miracle it is that it can be restored! The grace of God alone can bring it back again to its original beauty and strength. That miraculous drama is being constantly reënacted. "He restoreth my soul." Just as nature begins immediately to heal the wounds of the body, so the Holy Spirit works upon the heart of the penitent sinner and his virtues, long suppressed by selfish impulses, are recreated by the grace of God.

What Luther achieved in his day was repeated by John Wesley two centuries later in England. He preached with irresistible power the gospel of free salvation and thousands, as they listened, believed and were lifted out of their degradation, gaining a sense of worth they had never felt before, and rising from the squalor of misery and vice to virtuous self-respect. Wesley's success can not be explained except as we recall his gift of making his hearers see that they could be saved by grace. Many of them had believed themselves to be beyond hope. They understood the viciousness of their lives, but they saw no door of escape until Wesley's ringing voice proclaimed that salvation can not be earned by merit; whether a man is of high or low degree, his emancipation from sin is dependent upon the gift of God.

v

Here we need to guard against the blunder that has often been made by those who have been most sensitive of the divine favor. This is a high opinion of our own importance. Christianity has been criticized adversely because of the restriction of its interest to the welfare of the individual believer, tending to give him

an exaggerated sense of his worth. Dr. Felix Adler, in his Hibbert lectures, in contrasting the Christian ideal with that of Judaism says: "The individual was to work out his spiritual destiny no longer as included in an ideally just community, but standing on his own feet, remitted to his own resources,—just a man, loose from the national connections, no longer leaning on public law, but dependent on his own effort, or, if that should fail him, as soon became apparent, on the personal assistance of a superhuman divine individual."¹

We must admit that this criticism is just so far as organized Christianity is concerned. In most of our older hymns there was no recognition of social duty, no conception of any obligations toward mankind in general. This is also true of most of the revival hymns of to-day, the theology of which is a survival from that of a century ago. But when we go back to the gospels, we soon discover that Jesus gives no warrant for an excessive individualism. He recognizes the common welfare clearly and indisputably and the interlocking of all human relationships. The kingdom of heaven lies at the heart of his teaching. Strangely enough the theologians missed this salient fact for centuries. The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church are silent about it, and only within a generation has the church discovered that a social gospel is explicitly taught in the New Testament. Probably the reason for this failure is to be found in the former belief in total depravity. Only the chosen few came within the reach of the divine love. All others were beyond redemption. Thus there was no place in the thought of the church for such a wide outlook as that involved in the idea of the kingdom.

¹ Adler, "The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal," p. 40.

Men were content in the assurance of their own salvation and that of those of kindred mind. They saw no hope for any one beyond their sectarian boundaries.

But the day has arrived when such bigotry is no longer tenable by any one who has caught the spirit of the age. Men have grown more hospitable toward the ideas of their neighbors because they have learned how these ideas have come into being. Our forbears could believe that they were particularly chosen of God to be the recipients of his favor, but the idea of the divine purpose has broadened and we know that we cannot base any claim of virtue upon the fact that we were born in one church or faith as over against another. We have learned enough psychology to understand that if we were in the other man's place, we should probably think and act as he does. Thus we dare not condemn him for being what he is, lest we condemn ourselves in uttering judgment against him.

Moreover, we have come to realize that our welfare depends upon the welfare of those who are round about us. The fact that we are the beneficiaries of the divine favor does not warrant the assumption that we have no obligations toward our less fortunate neighbors. On the contrary, the grace of God requires that we act as channels through which it may be conveyed to others. That is the way we ourselves received it. As we have seen, our birth, our intellectual and spiritual inheritance, and our civilization, have all come from those whom God used to transmit his gifts to us. Few people are vain enough to think that they have created their own ideas or outlook upon the world.

The grace that we enjoy is no proof that God has singled us out for particular honor. It is our mark of responsibility, our call to service. Grace is as free as

the sunlight, but to realize its essential value those who receive it must transmit it to others. To try to hold it for oneself is to attempt the impossible, for spiritual gifts degenerate and become sterile except as they are kept in circulation. When this is done there is no danger of an inflated sense of our own importance, since on the one side we recognize our responsibilities, and on the other, the equal standing of our neighbors as recipients of the divine favor.

VI

There is another practical consideration to be kept in mind in connection with this aspect of God's relation to his children. When grace enters the soul, it sets up a new standard of conduct—a new goal to be striven for. It teaches us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Instead of taking the burden of endeavor from us, it faces us squarely with the responsibility of working out our own salvation. Nor are sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, mere abstractions. They have each a pointed meaning. The Christian above all others should show the gospel he professes in his life. A balanced view of things, not given to excess in any direction, a passion for what is just, finding expression in a life which obviously draws its strength from God—these are the qualities which grace implants in the sensitive soul, so that they become constituent elements of regenerated human nature. In brief, grace is the life of God in the heart of man: where that life is, it bears fruit in "deeds of lofty temper." If any man would learn the meaning of grace

in its fullness and power, he has an infallible source of information and inspiration in the sympathy, goodness, tolerance, purity, patience, generosity, and sacrifice, manifested by Jesus of Nazareth, who was "full of grace and truth."

CHAPTER XVI

GOD AS PEACE

I

Peace is one of the regal words of the Bible, and the idea of which it is the symbol holds a large place in both the Old Testament and the New, though it has a narrower and deeper meaning in the latter than in the former. In the Old Testament the fundamental sense in which the word is used is well-being, including both outward and inward good. But so frequently was Israel ravaged by war that eventually the incidental meaning displaced the original, so that we have inherited the idea of tranquillity which obviously covers only a part of well-being. In our modern security against hostile aggression, it is difficult to imagine the apprehension which all aliens arouse in such a primitive and warlike society as that which the older narratives of the Bible reveal. When strangers appeared they were exposed to suspicion and mistrust and only when they were able to give the assurance that their intentions were peaceful were they treated as friends.

From this practical meaning, the idea of peace passed by natural transition to express the most desirable relationship between God and his children. When men felt that they had displeased him by their sins, they were greatly relieved by the assurance that his attitude toward them was kindly. Thus greatly alarmed by an angelic visitation Gideon cried out: "Alas! O Lord God, be-

cause I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face;" but the answer came back: "Peace be unto thee, fear not; thou shalt not die." Hence, whether in the relations between man and his neighbor or between him and God, in the Old Testament peace carries the idea of prosperity and freedom from disturbance.

Perhaps the most characteristic quality of Christianity is its inwardness in contrast with Judaism which lays stress upon outward values. Thus the essential meaning of peace in New Testament usage is the serenity of soul which is effected through the sinner's reconciliation with God. When Jesus gave his legacy to his disciples in the words, "My peace I leave with you," he meant that they were to enjoy the same confidence, poise, and calm, which marked his own life. He can not have meant that his followers were to have a perpetual guarantee against persecution, oppression, turmoil, and the aggressive hostility, of those who believed neither in him nor his gospel. Imprisonments and martyrdoms soon became common in the early church. "Think ye not that I am come to send peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division. I am not come to send peace, but a sword." He knew that the pure and holy life to which he called his disciples would excite jealous hostility in the hearts of those who rejected the same call. There is nothing the carnal mind hates more than the unconscious judgment uttered against it by the pure in heart. In the bitterness of disposition aroused by this condemnation, it is easily stirred to a blind fury against the good. This accounts for at least a part of the vindictiveness and cruelty that the world has so often visited upon the prophet and reformer. Jesus understood perfectly that his followers would suffer, so that we are safe in the conclusion that

in promising them peace he was not thinking of deliverance from outward troubles.

What then was the meaning of the word as he used it? We have only to read his message and catch his spirit to understand that he was thinking of that inward harmony which ensures freedom from distraction and gives tranquil dignity to the soul. In all of his epistles St. Paul prays that those to whom he is writing may have "peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." He must have regarded it as an indispensable gift, a quality the Christian must possess, or he would not have recurred to it so often. And he was right. The peace which Christ gives is independent of circumstance however troublous. It is the calm which indicates that the channels between the subconscious mind and God are open and that in the intercourse thus established the assurance of divine support becomes the priceless possession of the human soul.

II

This condition of inward wholeness includes a variety of elements. One of the most obvious of these is freedom from fear and anxiety about the future. The conviction that all things work together for good to them who love God is one of the first proofs that the soul has found the peace which comes from union with God, and the assurance of final good which that union always gives. Man lives in a chaotic and distempered world until he reaches the conviction that he is the child of a God who cares for him and watches over him. Then order appears in the most unpromising circumstances. His heart is filled with steadiness and calm

and he goes forward undisturbed by any dreads or forebodings of what the future may bring.

Peace, however, is more than freedom from physical anxiety. To every man with any degree of mentality, life presents many a perplexing problem. It is charged with mystery. We cannot think of an end to space, but it is equally baffling to think of space extending on and on indefinitely. Where did it come from? What lies beyond the beyond? Why is it that evil so often triumphs over good? Why does God allow so much suffering and injustice, and how is it that goodness and merit are so often pushed into a secondary place by aggressive mediocrity? If the traditional belief in a special creation of man is wrong, has he any solid ground upon which to base his hope of immortality? Is Christian faith a reality or a shadow? These are but a few of the questions which disturb the intellectual repose of all who try to think their way through the mystery of our being. Suppose the universe had never existed! Yet we cannot grasp in thought the nothingness that would then have been.

Left to ourselves for the answer to these questions our minds would circle in an idle round, arriving nowhere, like a squirrel in a cage, and would grow weary and baffled in the process. But when we enter into partnership with "the God of all peace," a new light breaks over the enigmas of life and they take on fresh meaning. We take courage when we see that we see so little, and that beyond our seeing the purpose of God is being worked out in perfect accordance with his timeless plan. Belief in God enables men to see that the triumphs of evil are only temporary, that time is on the side of truth which will eventually prevail, and

this assurance gives them strength and calm—"the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

The Stoics believed in and taught a negative tranquillity. They strove to control or even suppress their natural desires. Epictetus expresses their dominant thought in the words: "Seek not that the things which happen should happen as you wish; but wish the things which happen to be as they are, and you will have a tranquil flow of life."¹ But this is not the Christian idea of peace, though it has often been so regarded. St. Thomas Aquinas was right when he said, "Our desires should find rest in One." The peace which is derived from God is positive in quality. It controls and sublimates the passions by directing them to holy ends. It is the perfection of joy which results from a complete and harmonious coördination of all the elements of personality and their union with God. Peace is thus a unifying principle binding thought, desire and action in a unitary system in which friction is eliminated or reduced to a minimum.

But probably the outstanding quality of peace is a good conscience. No mind divided against itself can function aright. There must be freedom and equilibrium before creative work is possible. A sense of divine forgiveness is thus essential to peace in its highest form. Nor is this a stagnant experience. There can be no sustained peace without growth. Increasing power directed to the highest ends gives a buoyant and undisturbable calm to the soul and establishes concord between it and God.

One practical result of this concord is quietness of temper in our human relationships. The man whose soul is composed of inharmonious elements is likely

¹ Epictetus, "The Encheiridion," VIII.

to be a center of discord among his fellows. The man whose belief in God rests on the uncertain grounds of a tradition that may be undermined is likewise apt to be a disturber of the peace. Most of the defenders of the faith, the men who have an eye for heresy in their fellows, are men who are not at peace in their own hearts. Subconsciously they are afraid that the foundations of their faith will not stand examination, and in their fear they act the same part in every age. In one age they force Socrates to drink the hemlock, in another they crucify Jesus, and in others burn Cranmer at the stake and excommunicate all who do not repeat their outworn shibboleths. But the man who has the inward repose given by an unshakable conviction that he is vitally related to God, and that therefore no harm can come to him, is always genial and tolerant in his relations to others, no matter how far he may be removed from them in opinion.

Thus peace in the popular sense of amity in social contacts is a by-product. It is, as St. Paul tells us, the fruit of the Spirit of God, which works for the common welfare, making due allowance for temperamental, racial, and other differences, banishing fear and suspicion and overcoming evil with good. And while resistance to evil is sometimes unavoidable, the ultimate ideal is a social order in which all the members will be so thoroughly imbued with the arts and graces of a godly life that their mutual relations will be unmarred by misunderstanding or friction.

III

In their yearning for peace, men have sought to find it by many roads. Torn by the everlasting conflict

that goes on within the soul between the physical and the spiritual, between the worldly and the ideal, between inclination and duty, many have withdrawn from the arena of action. They have become monks and recluses and, because they were freed from the storms and stresses of life, have fancied that they were in possession of this priceless gift. But the peace of isolation is counterfeit. It is not what Christ meant when he said: "My peace I give unto you." His peace was won by strenuous action at the very heart of the world's need. He did not retire from the struggles of mankind and leave men to find their way out of their difficulties as best they could. He stayed with them and helped them. Instead of running away from temptations, he faced and overcame them. The peace of a monastery is only partial at best. It is on a side track and is therefore of dubious worth. Yet there are multitudes who still believe that they can satisfy this craving of the soul for calm by escape from the common obligations of life. Those who close their ears to the cries of pain and need which rise from the hearts of the broken and despairing, whether on the superstitious ground that evil is not real, or on the selfish ground that they have no responsibility, are making the same mistake as the medieval monk, though with much greater selfishness of motive. The rich who live in their own exclusive neighborhoods "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," and go through life with no sympathetic knowledge of the problems of the poor, are victims of the same delusion. The peace which Jesus promised his disciples can never be realized except through active participation in the affairs of mankind and an earnest desire to coöperate in meeting its common obligations.

Equally disappointing is the attempt to find peace in material prosperity. Much of the restless unhappiness of men has its origin in the delusion that happiness can be bought with money. The same blunder is made in the effort to gain security against poverty, ill health, or old age. The only protection against the distress of mind aroused by the possibility of these and other evils is to give them no place in our thinking. But that cannot be done in a healthy way by a conscious effort to push these inflammatory ideas out of our minds. The way of escape from the damage they cause is to devote our energies to relief of the world's ills. This course of action withdraws our attention from ourselves and we discover the truth of the many-sided law that the way to find peace is to lose it in a higher aim.

In the light of these reflections, it is evident that peace must be earned in action. There is no discharge in the truceless war with evil. Peace in the Christian sense is the fruit of victory over the world. None who is a mere spectator of the combat can understand the meaning of this gift of God which the world can neither give nor take away. This explains why neither Omar Khayyám of old nor Henry Adams in our own time ever realized its blessedness.

It is also futile for men to try to find peace by compromise with evil. They lose their self-respect in the effort, and the respect of others as well. Yet there are multitudes who never utter their real convictions. They are afraid to speak out and thus their minds lose that limpid quality which is essential to lofty character. Only the light, energy, and joy, of God can give ascendancy to the spiritual in our nature, and peace is found only in the realm of the spiritual.

IV

The soul of man is a microcosm—a miniature of the universe. Within this little world a constant warfare goes on, either actually or potentially. This warfare is a picture of the state of the outside world. The evil impulse seeks to overcome the good; the selfish to displace the social. The carnal strives for mastery over the spiritual. Hence there is no finality in the acquisition of peace. It cannot be placed in a deposit vault to be kept safe against every attack. Peace is the fruit of a continued process. It shrivels and decays when it is protected from the open weather. The popular idea of peace breaks down at this point. The multitude always interprets peace in negative terms as freedom from strife. But there is always strife—where there is life. Nature pulsates with aggression. Even the seed in the ground must assert its rights or it will be elbowed to its death.

In the end much is lost in any critical situation by a refusal to face facts. Idealists, painting wonderful pictures of the *Federation of the World*, nearly always overlook the basal truth that man is a fighting animal. Though he loves peace, he does not love it enough to suffer what he regards as injustice without a fight. The normal man will answer blow with blow; nor are there any signs upon our spiritual horizons to suggest that the day is near at hand when this will not be so. The instinct to fight is deeply imbedded in human nature. How inconsistent it is for church assemblies to pass resolutions against war, while themselves engaging in disruptive strife!

St. Paul, with practical sagacity, saw the difficulty of avoiding conflict and the injustice of saying that it

is always wrong. There is rich wisdom in his advice: "If it be possible as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men." This takes due account of the fact, apparent to every competent observer, that there are many people who are still in a primitive stage of spiritual growth. They do not understand the meaning of justice in their social relations. They are self-centered, aggressive, and always ready to resort to force to accomplish their ends. It would be sheer folly to give an unconditional command to the Christian "to live peaceably with all men." This would put him at the mercy of ignorant or even brutal inferiors.

Here again, as in all the other relations to which reference has been made, the secret of a peaceful mind is the indwelling spirit of God. Conflict, even armed conflict, may sometimes be necessary, but when the God of peace is domiciled in the heart its essential calm will remain undisturbed amidst every fluctuation of circumstance. This divine indwelling is the foundation of peace. Only when God is in us is it possible to restrain the irritation that uncurbed would inflame both our neighbors and ourselves, or to treat those whose attitude toward us is hostile in a conciliatory manner.

Intolerance is one of the most prolific causes of friction among men. Selfishness, pride, ambition, and jealousy are also disturbing elements in their intercourse with one another. These qualities are inherent in human nature. They are a part of man's inheritance. How can they be kept in subjection, and their essential vigor sublimated into virtue? The love of God alone will work this transformation and, in working it, will incidentally give peace to the soul. God in the heart of man is peace, the peace which the world will never

know until it gives God the central place in its thought, motives, and affections. Then war will be impossible because its cause will have been removed. Meantime, every political plan or agreement to outlaw or abolish war will fail, because such plans overlook its roots and cause—the natural injustice, selfishness, and intolerance of the unregenerate human mind.

CHAPTER XVII

GOD AS JOY

I

It is a truism to say that, at its best, life is a hard struggle. Sooner or later every man confirms this observation in his experience, and finds it difficult to answer the question, whether his measure of happiness is to be put down on the credit or the debit side of the account. Yet the Bible answers the question unhesitatingly and finds the balance on the right side. It assures us of the possibility of blessedness which is another name for joy. The Psalmist rejoices in the God of his salvation, and is assured that life is more than worth while. "My soul shall be joyful in the Lord." "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."

In the New Testament this assurance is even stronger. It strikes the note of exultant gladness with intense and recurrent beat. Blessedness is a definite promise to the pure in heart, the meek, the peacemaker, and even to those who suffer persecution and tribulation for the sake of righteousness. The power, permanence, and exuberant fullness, of the believer's joy are continually set forth in its teaching. That the source of joy is in God is shown in the statement that there is rejoicing in heaven when a sinner repents. Christ also experienced joy in his saving work, and from its contemplation was able to endure the pain and humiliation

of the cross. The joy of the Lord is the believer's final reward.

Thus whatever the ultimate facts upon which we may agree, it is plain that the Bible teaches that joy may be the portion of every man who finds the true way of life. With many devout souls this would conclude the discussion of the problem. They ask for nothing more than what the Bible has to say upon any question. But with a multitude of others, this is not enough. They demand that the teachings of the Bible be confirmed in experience; failing that, they are likely to remain in doubt or even hostile to an idea seeking their franchise without other support. Nor is it legitimate to say that this is an erroneous attitude. It is a fact, and therefore it must be met. And after all, the world owes a great debt to the men who refuse to accept truth on authority, however exalted that authority may be. Until we have worked a doctrine out in our own experience, it is of doubtful value. If no one had ever questioned the venerable authorities there could never have been any scientific progress. We should still believe the world to be flat and the center of the universe or that the death of Jesus was a ransom paid to the Devil to emancipate man. Thus it is a wholesome thing that when the facts of daily life seem to run counter to the principles enunciated by the law, the church, or even the Bible, we should be constrained to find out the truth by a sincere and rigid investigation. It is not a mark of virtue to accept what we have been taught without verification. As Sir J. R. Seeley said in "Ecce Homo":

It is always easy for thoughtless men to be orthodox, yet to grasp with any strong practical apprehension the

theology of Christ is as hard as to practice his moral law. Yet if he meant anything by his constant denunciation of hypocrites, there is nothing which he would not have visited with sterner censure than that short cut to belief which many persons take when, overwhelmed with the difficulties which beset their minds, and afraid of damnation, they suddenly resolve to strive no longer, but giving their minds a holiday, to rest content with saying that they believe and acting as if they did. A melancholy end of Christianity indeed! Can there be such a disfranchised pauper class among the citizens of the New Jerusalem?

No true Protestant, however dogmatic his temper, could subscribe to the principle enunciated by Newman in the preface to his "Essay on Development": "He now submits every part of the book to the judgment of the Church, with whose doctrine on the subjects of which he treats he wishes all his thoughts to be coincident."

If therefore we have reason to doubt the Biblical assurance of joy, we are making no mistake in analyzing our experience to find the truth. No wise man is willing to rest on an unverified assumption without at least attempting its verification. However strong the presumption is that a Biblical doctrine is true, we are not justified in accepting it without an effort to confirm it in our own experience. Its real value for us depends upon our doing so. The truths of the Bible must be assimilated or they remain beyond the circumference of practical interest. There is no virtue or possible benefit from saying "we believe" where we have not a vital understanding of the questions involved. For an uneducated man to profess the conviction that the theory of Einstein is sound is meaningless, and many

a profession of religious faith is equally without value. A borrowed or second-hand religion is never vital.

II

For ages, in one form or another, man has been asking himself whether life is worth living. In one sense this is an academic problem, for we have to live whether we like it or not, though James Thomson, in "The City of Dreadful Night," makes the dismal preacher say:

Lo, you are free to end it when you will,
Without the fear of waking after death.

But whatever our ultimate answer to the question, to cut the knot by suicide is a denial of every fundamental instinct, and it is probably true that no sane or at least balanced man has ever done so. On the other hand, we have much to gain and nothing to lose by discovering the truth, for the mind is never easier than when it knows and accepts the inevitable whether it is desirable or not. Most of our mental anguish comes from worry over issues, the outcome of which we can not foresee. One of the most certain grounds of peace is the truth.

No argument is needed to prove that there is a vast amount of sorrow, tragedy, and disappointment, in human life. There is a great risk in birth, not only to the mother who may die in giving life to another, but also to the child who may be deformed in body or mind, or later may turn out to be a bitter failure. We have only to read the daily paper to realize how widespread is the net of human misery. All around is sin, crime,

accident, and despair. Little imagination is necessary to bring home to us the likelihood that our day of trial will come if it has not arrived already. Ill health only awaits the years. Bereavement is certain. Perhaps through no fault of ours all that seems to make life worth while will be ruthlessly snatched away. Whatever our faith in immortality, when we stand before the open grave, we feel with Ruskin how impotent are the "wild love and the keen sorrow to give one instant's pleasure to the pulseless heart." It is not strange that Anaxagoras described the mausoleum as the ghost of wealth turned into stone.

Yet in spite of all that can be said, the wonder is that there is so much pleasure and happiness in the world. Nature has a remarkable art in protecting her children against the pain she causes. And while trouble and sorrow are with us continually, we are quick to avail ourselves of every cessation of their activities and to find happiness in the intervals. If we were so constituted that we spent much of our time in visualizing the probabilities of disaster, life would be dark indeed.

Here we should bear in mind that what the Bible promises is joy and not pleasure or happiness. Jesus never gave the assurance to his disciples that they would be happy. On the contrary, he told them that they would be persecuted and would have to bear a cross. What we call happiness depends largely on what happens. There is an etymological relation between happiness and happening. Since we cannot always control our circumstances, we cannot always be happy, nor would we appreciate it if we could, for the soul has its weathers and our enjoyment of the sunshine is intensified by our recollection of the rain and storm.

This is even more true of pleasure, which is a restricted form of happiness. Its appeal is for the moment, and usually it is not cumulative in its effect. Thus the direct pursuit of pleasure or happiness is never successful. Failure to realize this is what has marked so many youthful faces with the lines of disappointment and has resulted in a cynical attitude toward life.

Those of the older generation are prone to censure the young as being given over to a wild pursuit of pleasure through indulgence of the appetites and the stimulation of the senses. But youth is much the same in every age with the exception that our time affords greater opportunity for the gratification of natural desires through the greater control over the powers of nature and their application to personal ends. The old restraints have been broken down by the telephone, the motor car, and other agencies of civilization. It is futile and shortsighted to make comparisons where the factors of the equation are different. We are safe in the conclusion that in every age there has been a sharp struggle between the natural and the spiritual man. St. Paul's vivid description of this conflict gains its force from the fact that he is describing not merely his own but a universal experience. Our lack of happiness is due not alone to the accidents and disappointments we suffer but also to the realization that we have not made the best of our opportunities. Our restlessness is a symptom of our unrealized potentialities.

III

Joy is one of the profoundest of experiences and may be described as a sense of harmony induced in the soul by the assurance of the highest well-being. Hap-

piness is superficial. It differs from joy as the surface of the ocean differs from its depths. Sometimes the surface is calm and at others turbulent, but the lower levels remain undisturbed by any changes going on above. To be joyful there must be an abiding peace, possible only when the whole personality is functioning aright, not alone in itself, but also in relation to God.

One of the surest marks of joy is growth. We have seen that pleasure has no cumulative effect. The appetites become jaded through gratification and an increasing stimulus is needed to produce the old effects. But the opposite is true of joy. Whenever we experience it, our souls are enlarged. There is no reaction. That is what Tennyson meant by "the glory of going on." The underlying reason for this satisfaction is the inner consciousness of a developing life. We know that we are making head against every inimical influence. This is another way of saying that we are at peace with God. When a man is assured that he is drawing upon an illimitable source of power, he is not overawed by any difficulty. He knows that he can endure every pain, bear every burden, and withstand every disappointment. Joy is the assurance of a subconscious flow of strength from the infinite reservoir—God.

There are several occasions of joy on its receptive or passive side. The first of these is that of memory. We recall the great experiences through which we have passed, childhood with its delights, youth with its spirit of adventure and promise of achievement, and manhood with its maturer blessings and the opening up of new vistas. Recollection brings these all back again and enables us to retrace the journey we have taken without the distress of the pain and bafflings of the

spirit which attended it as we moved forward and upward. "The joy of our salvation" is proved by the progress we have made and the conviction that God has guided us during the entire journey.

Then in the second place there is the immediate assurance of our hold upon God. This is an indispensable condition of joy. When a man possesses it he is rich beyond all material treasure. Money may buy pleasure or temporary happiness, but "all the wealth of Ormuz or of Ind" cannot bring lasting satisfaction or peace of mind. This is possible only to him who is convinced that he is living in a spiritual universe, and that the God who controls its destinies is an actual power in his life. The prophets of Israel, Jesus himself, St. Paul, Wycliffe, Bunyan, and other heroes and martyrs who dared and achieved great things, were not overborne by the sufferings of this present world, only because they knew that God was with them. Theirs was an abundant life made possible through their intimate relationship with their Father. They were convinced that his presence went with them and gave them rest and peace, and that he would stand by them until their victory was won. This is the secret of the great heroes of the faith in every age. When a man is convinced that God is behind him he becomes formidable and even invincible. He is the cutting edge, sharper than any sword, by which the word of God divides truth from error, justice from injustice, and selfishness from the common welfare. Such men have always been the instruments of righteousness and the mainstay of the race.

Again, joy is accentuated by the hope of better days to come. Particularly is this true when the sky has been darkened by the vicissitudes of life. Man is

never long content with the present. "We look before and after," and if the balance is on the right side, our gaze is forward rather than backward. This is "the blessed hope" which has always animated the true Christian. The future is secure when we are assured that God has been with us in the past and that we are in vital communion with him now.

IV

Thus far we have been speaking of joy on its passive side, for the most part, as indicated by the presence of God in man's heart. But this is not enough. Joy has also an active side. It must be creative if it is to be sustained. Like every other gift it is not an end in itself. While God is doubtless happy in our happiness and joyful in our joy, that is not the reason for his favor. It reaches beyond us to his far-sweeping purpose. One of the Psalmist's most discerning prayers is, "Forsake not the works of thine own hands." There is a remarkable depth of insight in these words, for even if God were only an oriental despot, who in a capricious mood had made man for a plaything, such an appeal would reach his inmost heart.

The deepest satisfaction always comes from those things into which the best that is in us has been put. The mother finds delight in her child with whom she shares her life and for whom she makes a multitude of sacrifices. The poet's joy is in his poem, the artist's in his picture, the engineer's in his bridge, the architect's in the building he designed. Whatever men create gives them a sense of achievement, the intensity of which depends upon the measure of themselves that has gone into the creation. This is a quality they share

with God. We are safe in the inference that he also has joy in what he has made in a measure that is infinitely deeper than our human joy because his achievement and design are so much larger than ours. No man can create life. All that he can do is to re-assemble materials already in existence, whereas God with far-visioned purpose working with infinite patience has created the universe and man with all his wonderful possibilities, including his capacity for suffering, love, thought, and sacrifice.

This brings us to the question as to how we are to take the potential gift of joy which is ours by virtue of our inheritance and keep it healthy and strong. Unselfish action is the key to the secret. Wherever man has a purpose and believes in its realization, however far off the goal may be, he will be buoyed up by a sense of joy that will withstand every disappointment. Strangely enough the greatest danger of depression and cynicism is in times of prosperity. This is true both of the individual and the nation. The rich nomads, who move with the seasons from Newport to Palm Beach and thence to the Riviera, are rarely happy, not to speak of being joyful. It was when Israel was at the height of her glory that she gave expression to her most pessimistic utterance: "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity." Again, it was when she was crushed under the ruthless heel of the conqueror who had carried most of her best people into exile that she sang some of her most joyful songs. Paradoxical though it may seem in the light of the universal desire for health, wealth, and success, man's joy has always been richest when his troubles were greatest.

If we are to realize the fullness of joy which Christ promised to his disciples, we must fulfill one condi-

tion. A sustained and buoyant calm can only be obtained by the complete coördination of our powers with the purpose of God. So long as our primary thought is our own welfare we are doomed to disappointment and eventual pessimism. Life is to be found only by losing it. As we give ourselves to the cause of human welfare in the abolition of ignorance, the increase of justice, the relief of distress, and the deepening of the sense of God in the life of every man, we shall understand the meaning of that blessedness which Jesus promised to his disciples, as we share with God the joy of creative service. But it must be admitted that such phrases are only vague generalizations. That is what makes so much of our moral teaching ineffective. What is justice or sympathy, not as defined in words but in deeds? Perhaps it is impossible to frame an answer that will be intelligible for all, but it is certain that if our first thought is the service that we can render to the kingdom of God, we shall have a deep and abiding joy which no circumstance can take from us. Selfishness is the surest road to the defeat of the soul's thirst for God.

There is an ancient story which illustrates this truth in a striking manner. Probably it originated in a medieval monastery or even further back. Like most tales of the kind it has taken on many different forms, though always with the same essential meaning. It is the story of a woman who died and to her amazement found herself at the gates of the lower world waiting for admission. But she could not be resigned to the justice of her fate and raised such a commotion that she at last attracted attention in heaven and God sent an angel to find out whether there was any justice in her plea. First she stridently asserted her respectability

on earth, but at last under the urgent cross-questioning of the messenger who asked whether she had ever been kind to any one on earth, she recalled that once she had given a carrot to a tramp. When this word was brought to him, God said to the angel: "A carrot is something; take it back to her, and tell her that if she hangs on to it you will draw her up to heaven." This the angel did and after fixing a cord to the carrot and handing it to the woman, he started heavenward with the cord in his hand. Clutching her carrot eagerly the woman found herself lifted upward, and moving rapidly toward heaven where she believed she belonged. Soon the other denizens of the lower world, noticing what was happening, clutched her skirts, and as they moved upward with her still others grasped their skirts and feet, until it looked as though hell was to be emptied through that one kindly deed.

But the woman feeling the increasing weight looked beneath her and saw what was going on. Instead of being happy in the service she was thus rendering to other unfortunates, she was frightened and cried out, "Let go! this is my carrot." Immediately the cord broke and the entire company fell back into the place where they belonged. Underneath the exaggerated realism of this story, it expresses in dramatic form the fundamental law that only in ministering to others do men find the real satisfactions of life, whereby their own souls are mellowed, refined, enriched, and given the sense of spiritual well-being which Jesus meant when he said "that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." One final thought to be kept in mind is this, that none can reach this lofty ideal except as he gives himself without reservation to God, and dedicates himself to the divine will. Then in the

prophet's words "his reward will be with him and his work before him," in the peace and security which sustain him and the assurance of his soul's continued upward flight in the ever opening eternity. Perfect joy is to do God's will in faith that it can be done, and in confidence that at last it will be evident "that all things work together for good."



SECTION IV: GOD IN ESSENCE

CHAPTER XVIII

GOD AS LIFE

I

Many noted thinkers, including philosophers and biologists, have tried to define life but without success. No exercise of the mind is more difficult than the definition even of simple inanimate objects. When our verbal wall has been reared and carefully inspected, we usually overlook some fissure through which the magic substance that we had hoped to imprison escapes. But the impossibility of defining life is evident on reflection since we have no other terms than those of itself with which to explain it. At best we can only hope to describe some of its characteristic marks.

While the word "life" is used in a variety of senses, its fundamental meaning is that quality shared by plant, animal, and man, which constitutes its *livingness* as distinguished from the lifelessness of the inorganic world. The difficulty of finding the line between what is living and what is not is illustrated in a nut or seed which, to the outward eye, gives no more evidence of life than a pebble. There is, however, in the seed a potentiality which under the proper conditions will become actualized in a plant or tree. But when we say that the development of an oak is "due to forces resident in the acorn" we are only deluding ourselves with

words and are certainly giving no explanation of what has taken place. In all its manifestations life presents itself as an insoluble mystery, excepting as we fall back upon the one adequate though undifferentiated explanation of ourselves and the universe—God.

No biologist has yet been able to give a list of marks of life which has won general acceptance, but probably none will deny that it is always characterized either actually, as in the case of the plant or animal, or potentially, as in the case of the seed, by individuality, self-preservation, reproduction, growth, self-determination, and in the higher animals and man, certain emotional and mental qualities. These characteristics all rest upon a physical base. Chemical changes are as much a part of the organic as of the inorganic world, and are more intricate in the former than in the latter. Yet this does not justify the physicist in maintaining that life can be explained in terms of mechanism. More than ether, atom, and molecule, is necessary to account for it, though it will sometimes economize thought to regard life in terms of chemical changes, if it is not forgotten that these changes are but an aspect of it and not an explanation.

For at the outset we may as well face the fact that in its essence life is beyond the reach of our minds. We can only seize upon its external manifestations. Our bodies are made of the same materials as the inorganic world about us. We can assemble the materials for the making of a man; so much carbon, so much oxygen, so much iron, and the proper proportions of other elemental substances. Yet the man would be as far off as ever. Even though we had the skill to arrange these materials in the form of an Apollo, they would still lack the one thing needful—

what the ancients called spirit, because they identified breath and life.

Nor is it possible to explain how this organizing principle which gives individuality to every living thing first came to be. Scientists have offered various explanations. The suggestion has been made that there is an "organic corpuscle" which is immortal and only awaits a favorable environment to burgeon in living forms. But this is too shadowy a conjecture to afford any intellectual satisfaction. In the nature of things it can never be proved, nor can it be made to appear reasonable. The intense heat and cold to which the earth was subjected for ages before it was ready for life, would seem to preclude such a possibility. Life, as we know it, can not be conceived as existing in such extremes of temperature.

A second and more likely suggestion concerning the origin of life is that of spontaneous generation. According to this hypothesis at some far distant day, the chemical conditions were ripe in the primal ooze for the production of the first protoplasm. From this protoplasm all living things, plant, animal, and man, have been derived. Nor is it an adequate objection to this conjecture to point out that there is no evidence of spontaneous generation in our time. For the conditions have changed. It probably took millions of years to pass from the chemical substance of life to the organic structure of that substance. That we are unable to condense the process into a few hours is not surprising. In a few seconds we can destroy life that all the scientists in the world can not restore. There are some processes which are not reversible. All things considered, this is the only satisfactory hypothesis apart from "special creation" which raises as many difficul-

ties as it solves. If all living things have been instantaneously created by the fiat of an all-wise God, how are we to account for the noxious, apparently useless, and grotesque forms of life?

There is no danger of intellectual pride in giving our franchise to spontaneous generation as the more likely origin of life, if we bear in mind that this is not offered as an explanation of life. It is merely a description of the processes involved and does not seek to state why the succession of stages has taken place. Thus evolution has as much need of God as the ultimate cause of life as has special creation. It does not matter what means were used in creating life, whether the process was instantaneous or æonic. God is an integral factor in any equation offering a solution to this problem.

II

Whatever the antecedent process by which life appeared upon the earth, the supreme fact is that it is here. It is our priceless possession and therefore requires the wisest care that we can bring to bear upon its conservation and development. Everywhere life is in evidence in forms without number, yet so unique that our very blood cells are probably as distinctive as our finger tips. Certainly "all flesh is not the same flesh," though it is likely that this truth has a much wider reach than St. Paul understood, so that if we had the refinement of method to make the test, we could see that it distinguishes individuals as well as species. In every nook and corner of the world life can be found exploring, exploiting, trying to secure a foothold. It is in the air, in the deepest depths of the ocean, on the

top of the frozen mountains, at both the poles, in gloomiest caverns—and on the broad sunlit spaces it is so abundant that man has to wage a constant combat with other forms of being that are disputing his title deeds and making mock of his legal sanctions. The weed never yields in its effort to push out the cultivated plant; the boll weevil would eat the fiber with which man seeks protection against the weather; ten thousand enemies seen and unseen match their wits against his to get his food or his place, or even more ambitiously to feed upon his blood.

The whole round world is covered with the web of life in which there is a constant drama of love and death. The stream moves on; new generations rise and old ones pass from the stage; but life never yields to defeat. It continues through countless changes and even in its lower forms displays remarkable tenacity of purpose and great resource in adjusting itself to new conditions. Hunger and love are its controlling passions; yet back of these with their terrific impulsions, lies an unwavering effort to express itself in nobler forms—in beauty, and in sacrificial service. The supreme glory of life lies in its readiness to die for other than individual ends. Nature offers countless illustrations of this central principle. The mother giving herself for her child, the soldier for his country, are merely typical of what can be seen in any meadow on a summer afternoon.

From the point of view of man's experience, the climax of life is reached in himself. Here the various qualities which command admiration even in the lowest forms of being are displayed upon a wider stage and appear in the light of the knowing mind. In man life becomes conscious of itself, and in the

power of reason has another instrument with which to mold its own destiny. Reason directs powers that hitherto have only dreamed or stumbled forward half awake and controls them until they move with confidence in the assurance of their capacity to subdue material obstacles and bind them to its unconquerable will.

History is replete with the records of the victories that life is always winning. No sooner is one rampart scaled than another and higher one is sought. Life is never satisfied with what it has achieved. The done seems petty, as over against the vast undone. Now man swims under the ocean like a fish, flies through the air like a bird, speaks across continents like a god—and yet he feels that his conquests have only begun.

The indomitable spirit of life and its flaming purpose are revealed in one of its last geographical goals not yet realized but destined to be crowned with victory. The doom of Mount Everest is sealed. Some day in the near future man will stand upon that defiant peak. How do we know? Because insurgent life in man has willed that it shall not be stopped until it reaches the roof of the world. Nor is this a blind challenge hurled against the last stronghold of impersonal nature. Man knows. Forty years ago he tried to scale these heights and reached a level of 21,000 feet. Twenty years later his rising spirit pushed 2,000 feet beyond his previous achievement. Fifteen years ago he mounted still higher and added another 2,000 feet, reaching a height of 25,000 feet. Three years ago he climbed to 27,000, and in 1924, at the cost of the death of two unflinching heroes, he stood on Everest's shoulder, 28,000 feet above the sea. Some day he will master the 1,000 feet remaining and his eye will range

full circle across the mountains of Afghanistan—toward the Mesopotamian plains, the Indian ocean, the haunting vale of Kashmir, or wherever his fancy directs.

Man will succeed because he grows in wisdom and stature, whereas a mountain's limits are fixed. Every failure whets man's spirit for higher effort. Everest fights desperately and with many terrible weapons. Frost, ice, beetling crags, rocks that rise sheer, hidden abysses, driving blizzards laden with cutting snow and hail, and merciless avalanches—these are her agents of destruction and she uses them all with intense fury against her humblest living adversary who dares to violate the sanctities of her summit. But Everest is blind while man *sees*. He learns by experience and every defeat strengthens his will to victory. Such is life—inexplicable and unconquerable.

III

In this study we are concerned primarily with life in its mental or spiritual aspect. Though, as we have seen, we cannot tell what life is, we can learn some of its laws by observation, and perhaps profit by our knowledge in giving fuller and freer expression to the vital forces that are in us. No living thing is independent of the world. No organism can retain its vitality unless it is in harmony with the reservoir of energy we call the universe. Certain processes must go on within every organism or it returns to the inorganic whence it came. Since energy is always going out from living things as the price of being alive, this loss must be redressed through the taking in of energy in at least an equal amount. There is constant wear and

tear in every organism. Fatigue, age, and death show that the capacity for self-maintenance is imperfect and temporary.

Technically the building-up process is called "anabolism" and the breaking-down process "katabolism," and when both processes are thought of together, they are called "metabolism." Thus an organism, for example, the human body, is always trading, and aiming to make a profit and build up a surplus of strength. It strives to store up energy in potential form so that it may be able to meet any crisis that may rise. A brief existence is conceivable on a hand-to-mouth basis, but when the income only equals the outlay there is no margin and a slight accident will cause disaster. This is why an organism is much more efficient than any mechanism that man has made. It can turn potential energy into actual energy with only minimal waste, whereas a steam engine is able to utilize only a small percentage of the energy of the coal it burns. The balancing of the account with something left over as capital or reserve is what makes growth possible after the machinery has been repaired. Men sometimes boast of their inventive skill in making machines, but no engine has ever been built which is self-repairing. An optician can make a better lens than the human eye, but he is helpless when it comes to making one that will recreate its worn or injured parts.

The urge of life pushes on through growth to reproduction. Life is never satisfied to remain where it is. This accounts for its aggressiveness and abundance. Its genius is—"be fruitful and multiply." The abundance thus attained results in the fierce competition between individuals and species which causes so much distress in the world as the weaker go down in defeat.

But on the other hand, through the sharpening of wits and the development of strength to meet trials and emergencies, the higher forms of life have been made possible.

IV

The working capital of every man is the life he now has. His supreme task is to take that life and enlarge and enrich it in every possible way. God has furnished it to him, not as a gift but as a trust. Under careful management it will increase in every good quality. But to do so the laws of life as they work on the primary physical level must be observed. In the stress and strain of living with its cares and worries, there is a constant outgo of spiritual energy. This must be returned to the soul or it will decrease in power and worth. Multitudes forget this fundamental law. The soul is always in process of breaking down and unless compensation is made, it will cease to live. One of the essential marks of spiritual vitality is growth. But in order for the soul to grow, it must hold commerce with God and receive from him the increased strength which makes growth possible in the form of the reward he always gives for righteous action. This is what is meant by the advice of Jesus that we should "lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven."

A second and equally essential mark of spiritual vitality is exhibited in its reproductive power. There is no life except that which comes from life. This is true physically, and it is also true spiritually. Where the flame of sacrificial love for truth and right burns brightly in any soul, it kindles and sustains the same light in other lives. The gravest charge that can be

made against organized religion in our time is that it has lost its enthusiasm, the passion for the life of the soul which has always characterized Christianity in its times of power. There is a spiritual no less than a physical "race suicide." When the hearts of men grow cold in sympathy and service to their fellows decadence has already put its stigma upon their lives.

The one escape from this disaster is the direction of life into wider channels than the interests of the individual. No man can live to himself alone. If he tries it he will fail, and his soul will die in the process. Self-help, thrift, ingenuity, initiative, and work have been extolled by self-regarding moralists with the promise of splendid prizes in the form of wealth and power. But every such promise is counterfeit because it offers a perishable reward as a mirage to deceive the thoughtless and unwary. So long as men think mainly of themselves and what they are going to get out of life, their returns will be blighted at the core. The fruit of their labors will prove to be "Dead Sea apples." This accounts for the fear, suspicion, cynicism, and essential unhappiness which mark the lives of so many of the rich and successful.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it." These words are not a clever paradox but the statement of one of the fundamental laws of life. The heroes of the human race are not the ruthless individualists who climbed to wealth and power over the disappointments and failures of their contemporaries, but the men who spent their lives unto death in discovering truth, furthering justice, and establishing higher ideals—in brief, in serving mankind. Man is an individual only in the sense in which a leaf lives a life separate from the other leaves upon the same tree. Plainly its welfare depends

upon the welfare of the tree, though sometimes an unhealthy tree will throw most of its strength into one branch and give it a specious appearance of health. Such is the relation that the individual man bears to the community. If he draws to himself more than his share of material good because of the accident of position or any other cause, society suffers. One does not need to be a "radical" to see that the distribution of wealth in the present social order is unjust. The great material rewards usually go to men of narrow outlook; the trader, the banker, the promoter, and manager of industry, who are exploiting the increments which have come through the pioneers in invention, work, science, and the arts. What a topsy-turvy civilization is ours! The thinker, the teacher, the real creator of values, working unheralded in his laboratory, must be content with a bare existence, while all around them men with minds of lower power live in "kings' palaces."

That the widespread belief in material success—indicating a paralysis of the spiritual faculties in the popular mind—is so deep-seated that men are not censured for using positions of public trust to enrich themselves—does not alter the fundamental law that the only abiding rewards are those which result from devotion to the common good. It is a pity that the word "socialism" has become associated with a party of dubious wisdom so that its mention kindles angry emotions in many minds. Socialism should be the complement of individualism in the interests and outlook of every rounded personality. As a matter of fact, in practical affairs this is already the case. The public school, the highway, the post office, and other socialized or partly socialized activities, indicate that no sensible man

is any longer a thoroughgoing individualist. But we still have a long way to go before the idea that his interests consist in reducing his public service to a minimum can be erased from the mind of the average citizen.

Beyond the community lies the entire world of mankind with all its varieties of nationality, race, color, political and religious creed, and conflicting hopes and aims. The purpose of life in its highest forms is to integrate these differences so that mankind may become in reality what it is now in name—a brotherhood. But only a few men have the imagination to visualize mankind guided and controlled by its intelligence and moving on to assured victory over its enemies, undisciplined emotion, social and religious prejudice, ignorance, greed, and hate. Life will eventually be triumphant, but in the meantime he who would live adventurously now must expand his horizons until they include men of violent antipathies, alien races, and differing traditions. Life is always enriched by the variety of its contacts and even from those with whom we disagree profitable lessons can be learned.

All life is derived from God as the only adequate source. "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." Life is therefore a trust and is governed by the law of trusts. No man has been given life for his own enjoyment. That would not be a large enough object to justify God in going to the trouble to create it. The divine purpose always reaches beyond the individual, however noble he is in character and attainment. To live richly and abundantly, it is essential to "seek first the kingdom of God," through the cultivation of the personal virtues, and through devotion to every cause that furthers the common welfare. This is the

only way in which the trust can be returned to God who gave it, together with the increase accruing from its proper use.

When does life end? The answer lies beyond human experience. It is a mystery in the present, and therefore not surprising that its future is hidden in the mists of mystery. This does not mean that there is no hope of its permanence, at least in its higher and more faithful and fruitful forms. While we know nothing of to-morrow, we have faith that it will come—faith based upon all our yesterdays. Here it seems reasonable to rest upon the faith of Jesus who had no doubts of the continuance of life. He was confident that it will triumph over death. Hence he assured his disciples that in his "Father's house there are many mansions."

None has ever returned from the grave to tell of his experience in that undiscovered country. We have every reason to discount the testimony of those who profess to know. They have no data to justify their vivid descriptions of the heavenly city. Doubtless it is better so. We do not need to know, for we can carry on in confidence if we trust in God and do the right.

Once a physician at the bedside of a dying man was asked by his patient whether he thought he would recover. Knowing that it was a fatal illness, he answered evasively, saying, "You are a very sick man." "I see," said the man, "I am going to die. Tell me, doctor, 'What is on the other side?'" The doctor reluctantly admitted that he did not know, then bade his patient "good-by." When he reached the door, his dog unexpectedly jumped into the house, rejoicing to see his master. With a happy inspiration, the doctor

returned to the sick room and said to the dying man, "My dog rushed into your house to see me, though he was never here before. He came into a strange place confidently, because he knew his master was here. Is there not a lesson in this for us? When the summons comes, we can cross the dark river eagerly because our Master is waiting on the other shore." This is not only life, it is abundant life, the eternal life which is the perpetual theme of Jesus in his gospel of victory over death and the grave. God is life; therefore life will abide.

CHAPTER XIX

GOD AS POWER

I

The universe is a stately word which covers wide areas of which we are utterly ignorant, but we are safe in saying that it is a vast power house. Where the central station is located, or whether there is one, no man can tell. And though we do not hear the whirl of the machine, we can see it at work at any moment of our existence, which is spent in the presence of a ceaseless flow of sustained energy. This energy spins the earth on its axis, holds it in place in its circuit of the sun, and speeds it on its course with the rest of the solar system. It shoots light and heat across the depths of space, pulls and pushes the tides in their ceaseless rhythm, draws water from arctic ice fields and tropic oceans, and distributes it over the earth, making life possible for man and beast. It causes the grass to grow, the birds to sing, the trees to rustle in the wind, the blood to circulate in our veins, the balloon to rise, and the stone to fall.

The immense place that power holds in the thought of man is shown by his eagerness to get control of it. Here and there it is found condensed in a form ready for his use, as for example in forests, coal, and oil fields. Civilized nations are prompt to go to war to gain what they believe to be their share of these advantages. Oil is the stored up sunlight of other ages

and is wealth to those who would move easily and readily from place to place over the earth's surface. This accounts for the continued struggle in which men have engaged in order to secure natural resources for their own use.

Power is essential to life. Food, air and water are the means by which the primal energy of the universe finds access to our bodily machines. They are the fuel which gives the strength to keep us going. To live we must have a continual supply of power and as yet we have devised no direct way of obtaining it. Some day this may be done, when man finds the secret of drawing upon the energy of the sun as the plant does now, but in the meantime for his physical existence he must devote himself to the task of relating himself to the infinite source of power by finding for himself food, clothing and shelter.

The power which is everywhere in evidence in the universe, holding together the atom and the star, is God in his least personal aspect. There is no other explanation which will satisfy the mind in its instinctive search for the cause of the universal application of force manifested in the constant dance of life and the ceaseless flow of electrons. Behind matter there is a spiritual essence. The apparent solidarity of the rocks or of steel melts away before the penetrating gaze of the physicist; the tangible capitulates to the intangible, and the permanent granite is found to be in a constant state of internal turmoil in which atoms swing around each other at distances relatively as great as those separating the heavenly bodies. God is the essence of it all, and in everything that is we have a revelation of his power, material, intellectual, or spiritual.

II

Man's need of power is constant. Shut him off from the reservoir for a few moments and he will die. His need of the air he breathes and burns to keep the engine of life going is a proof of this fact. He has to work vigorously or he will become detached from the sources of supply. This explains why life is a continuous struggle. Our environment presses against us on every side and threatens to crush us, so that we have always to be on guard. There is none so favored as to be secure. The poor man toils for the bare necessities of existence and it seems to him that his richer neighbor is free from danger. But he is wrong in this conclusion. If a good environment were all that is necessary to achievement and virtue, the children of parents of wealth and culture would be the leaders in every good enterprise. As a matter of fact they rarely equal their fathers in what they do. Few of the great men of history had sons who made a name, notwithstanding their initial advantages. It is well for us that this is so, for if Moses, Newton, and Lincoln had been able to transmit their genius to their offspring, a race of supermen would long ago have risen and would now hold the masses of mankind in bondage. Nor is the reason for the failure of so many of those whose initial advantages were of the best hard to discover. The truth is that comfort tends to cut the sinews of effort. It is easier to be a worker or a martyr in a cabin than in a palace, and the poor man's son with a vision of what he may become is likely to go further and to rise higher than the rich man's son who lacks this incentive. But whether a man is poor or rich, he has to struggle without ceasing against the

sharp press of circumstance or the subtle and destructive illusion of the lotus eater. In either case his greatest need is power.

Nor is it alone against his environment that man has to struggle. His intensest battles are within himself. Robert Louis Stevenson was only partially right in his masterly creation "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." He was a pioneer rather than an exhaustive explorer. There are not only two but many potential personalities in every man. Happy indeed is he in whom virtuous wisdom always is in command. The men and women we know are not the simple entities they seem to be. Each mind is a complex made up of many tendencies, some of which are utterly contradictory of others. In normal times the dominant quality retains the mastery and gives character to the personality. But in times of stress or unusual strain the balance is liable to disturbance and there is often a break or a temporary loss of command, and the man acts in a manner which contradicts all that we have believed him to be. This is the reason the world is always ready to accept the worst gossip about any person, however honorable the position he holds. He may be a great statesman or religious leader but if the slightest suspicion is uttered against him, the public will be quick to jump to the conclusion that he is guilty. Men would be less ready in affirming their belief in the truth of malicious gossip about their neighbors if they realized that in doing so they are passing judgment upon themselves and revealing their lack of character. Perhaps the chief reason for their promptness in harboring doubts of each other's integrity is instinctive, and rests upon a recognition of the narrow margin of their own respectability.

Thus to retain control over the various factors which

make up personality and keep them coördinated in a system, which presents a consistent front to the world, is no light task. Just as a government must be on constant guard against the possibility of rebellion and have forces at hand ready to suppress it if it should occur, so the governing tendency of the mind must be always alert to detect any evidence of insubordination on the part of those elements which are held in restraint. The various passions are liable to assert themselves at any time and, unless they are curbed, they will throw off all authority and seize the reins. Then the personality loses its equilibrium and unless the former tendencies regain control, a new and different personality appears. Mr. Hyde drives Dr. Jekyll from the drawing-room into the basement of unrealized aspirations. Hence the wisest and sanest men require a steady influx of power to keep their faculties properly balanced and coördinated and to protect them against a mind divided against itself. This is what the Psalmist meant when he affirmed his need of God: "My soul cries out for God, for the living God." In the struggle to retain an integrated personality, man's greatest asset is "the power of God unto salvation."

III

So far we have been speaking of physical conflict which, however intense, is only the beginning of man's struggle on his upward journey. The physical merges into the spiritual where the battle grows more acute. It is a remarkable fact that has been largely overlooked by the majority of Christian preachers in all ages that Jesus did not spend much of his thought in condemning the grosser or physical sins. Perhaps he took it for

granted that all men understood the primary moralities. But he also understood that the world requires only a formal or conventional acquiescence toward an ethical standard that is largely negative in content. "Thou shalt not commit the obvious sin" is the command of society which pursues the matter no further and has nothing to say against the sins of the mind: intellectual dishonesty in affirming beliefs without having thought out the reasons; pride which gives too high an estimate of one's own worth and a correspondingly low estimate of his neighbor's; jealousy which poisons the soul and deforms the sense of fair play; and hypocrisy which undermines integrity of character.

To guard against the inroads of these destructive qualities and many others of a kindred nature is man's real battle, and it cannot be won without an almost il-limitable supply of power. This is why the saints and seers of all ages have affirmed that man can only be saved by the grace of God. Knowledge is not enough to protect him against the defects of his nature. How often a man acts against what he knows to be right! People worry themselves into the madhouse over trivialities that they can not control. They burn themselves out by giving play to evil appetites when their intelligence shows clearly that they are bartering a priceless inheritance for less than a mess of pottage. The mad rush of life goes on not because men do not know but because they do not care. It requires more energy than they possess, or are willing to use, to sublimate their evil tendencies, their greed, pride, and envy, into virtuous activities. Yet while the world is quick to censure the man who commits a physical sin and to brand him as bad, it is usually indifferent toward those whose souls are corrupted by worldliness, and

lack of charity and of the other graces of true character.

Thus, if power is necessary in man's struggles against his environment and his passions, it is much more essential to hold in check these evil tendencies which so often are the defects of the best of qualities—defects that rise from lack of proper coördination and emphasis. This was what Jesus meant when he told Nicodemus that he must be born from above. The sins of the spirit are too subtle and deep-seated to be expelled by any other means than a continual flow of power from the central source. Only the life of God in the soul of man can purify it of greed, envy, worldliness, pride, jealousy, fear, arrogance, and the many other vitiating qualities which make it of the earth earthy.

IV

So far we have been thinking of power in negative terms, for the purpose of warding off evil rather than for positive achievement. But man can never be satisfied with negations even though they are virtuous. "Thou shalt not" is the burden of the Old Testament law: "Thou shalt" is the burden of the New. This is what St. Paul meant in his warning "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Nor is it enough to win on a narrow margin for sometimes a victory over temptation is bought at too great a cost. It leaves the soul limp and worn without further power of resistance. The spirit of man must be buoyant if he is to exercise a high influence for good. The church has blundered in making resignation one of the major Christian virtues. Resignation is dull and passive and

is closely akin to fatalism. It is a mark of defeat rather than of victory; at least it indicates a suppression of the abundant life which is the right of every man and which it is the purpose of Christ to give to all.

Wide margins are always necessary if real achievement is to be assured. When Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, defeated the Romans at the battle of Heraclea, he was unable to follow up his success because it had cost him so much. Outwardly a victory, it was in reality a defeat because he was the aggressor, and so we have the striking phrase "Pyrrhic victory" to set forth the danger of fighting without sufficient reserves to follow up a victory. This is equally true in the conflicts of the soul. There must always be power to go on easily after every struggle or the danger of reaction will be so great as to become a disturbing element. This explains why so many people drop out of the path of rectitude in their middle and later years. They do not take the trouble to build up a spiritual reserve with the result that in the day of crisis they fall.

Every one knows the necessity for capital in conducting a business. Provision must be made against recurrent periods of depression or the enterprise may be submerged. A large percentage of business failures is due to this cause rather than to mismanagement. It is the same with the soul. It is not enough to conquer our disabilities. To use St. Paul's expressive phrase we must become "more than conquerors" if we are to have peace and joy in the ceaseless conflict in which we are engaged. "There is no discharge in that war," and the only way in which it can be won is by the backing which will enable us to withstand the most sudden and powerful onrush of the foe.

There is no promise of immunity against pain and sorrow in man's earthly pilgrimage. We are compassed about on every side with seen and unseen foes. We wrestle against principalities and powers. Sooner or later grief and disappointment enter every life. Those modern cults in the Christian church whose main purpose is to ward off pain are on the wrong track. Pain is a part of the discipline of life and is a necessary condition in the culture of the soul of fine texture. Christ suffered and was made perfect through his sufferings. His followers who have most nearly approximated to his ideal have also suffered. Take the life of St. Paul! He was beaten with rods, shipwrecked, stoned, imprisoned, starved, and humiliated by inferior men. "Without were fightings, within were fears" is an epitome of his autobiography. Yet he could say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Men shrink from the battle and the strife, but in so doing they are making their approach from the wrong side. What matters is not the weight of the load we carry, but the margin of strength that is left after it is carried. We may illustrate this again by a financial reference. To the man of modest income it may seem that his neighbor is extravagant in making large expenditures for things he might do without. But if his income is correspondingly large, he can do so and still grow in wealth much faster than his more thrifty critic. Thus it is too much to ask men, with Rabbi ben Ezra to—

welcome each rebuff,
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!

Strive and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare never grudge
the throe! ¹

But it is not too much to expect them to accept the tribulations of life with the confidence rising from the knowledge that they can be borne. It is not the weight of our affliction that counts, so much as the margin of strength remaining after it is carried. So long as our spiritual income is larger than our expenditures, we can meet whatever strains may come in calm assurance. The great souls of history have been men who have endured trials that would crush those of lesser strength. They were able to carry on with vigor because "their strength was as the strength of ten." Their sorrows and disappointments, instead of handicapping them, were the divine processes by which their spiritual fiber was toughened, their sympathies enlarged, and their character tempered for high endeavor.

Christianity is the religion of the surplus. It is never satisfied with its achievements. Its devotees must strive even after they have attained. Nature with lavish hand scatters her seeds, knowing that most of them will never bear fruit. A thousand acorns fall that one may become an oak. So it is with our virtues. We need power to accumulate them, to build them into our spiritual fabric, that we may be unshaken in the evil day. Power is also essential to widen our horizons and to enlarge our knowledge of life, duty, and destiny, that virtue may go out from us as we come into contact with our fellows. The preacher or writer broadcasts his message so that it is heard or read by thousands, but

¹ Browning, "Rabbi ben Ezra."

he is content if here and there a soul responds. He expects no great returns. He knows that he must give without restraint to realize even a modest return upon his effort, but to do so a larger strength than his own is indispensable.

V

This brings us back to God, who is the one source of power. Only when he is present in the heart of man is victory possible over the forces of disruption and disintegration. He takes these opposing and rebellious qualities and shapes them into an organic system which is controlled by his spirit. Their very resistance becomes a source of strength in their new relations, when they are directed to the right ends. His power informs them so that the man, who before was tossed hither and thither by the capricious impulses of his uncoördinated personality, stands before the world as a strong and consistent character.

This was what took place in the life of Moses after he had fled from Egypt to the Midian desert where his station was that of a lowly shepherd. But he had a vision of God in the burning bush through which he realized a power that he had never known before, and he went forth to lead his people from bondage—a task which he had previously regarded as utterly beyond his strength. Saul of Tarsus had the same experience on his fateful journey to Damascus when in a flood of light such as he had never before experienced he became aware that the power of God was mediated to him in Christ. Centuries after, Samuel Rutherford, when a prisoner in a castle on the west coast of Scotland because of his Christian testimony, meditated upon

God's love until every stone in the walls of his cell shone like a ruby. The power of God can transform the humblest cabin into a more beautiful palace than earthly potentate ever inhabited, and fill the soul of the lowliest of men with a sense of peace, strength, and victory, which kings would envy.

Man's task is to open the way to his soul through which this power may enter. God is all around us, breathing in the air, shining in the light, seeking admission to every life as the tides seek the inlets along the shores of the ocean. The secret of those who find him and are found by him, so that their lives become centers of truth and goodness, is easily discovered. It is found in the power that flows into them from the one illimitable source. Men must seek him or they will never find him, and when they find him they must practice the art of using the power he gives for holy purposes. Most of the world's failures are due to the misuse of power, its direction to unworthy ends. One of the most obvious evidences of this weakness is seen in the way in which the accumulation of money as an ideal has entered into the bone and marrow of our generation. As William James has said: "We have grown literally afraid to be poor. The desire to gain wealth and the fear to lose it are our chief breeders of cowardice and propagators of corruption. We despise any one who elects to be poor in order to simplify and save his inner life. If he does not join in the general scramble and pant with the money-making street, we deem him spiritless and lacking in ambition. We have lost the power even of imagining what the ancient idealization of poverty could have meant. . . . The prevalent fear of poverty among the educated

classes is the worst moral disease from which our civilization suffers."

Henry Adams uttered the same truth indirectly in his contrast of the Dynamo and the Virgin: "As he grew accustomed to the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the 40-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross." The power for which most men are seeking in this age is that of the dynamo, driving its wheels at vertiginous speed, thus enabling them to move at a swifter pace across the face of the earth or through the air than Mercury ever dreamed of. Yet the force which moves the dynamo is occult, supersensual, mysterious. To mask our ignorance we call it gasoline or electricity. No man can explain it any more than he can explain the transformation of his own innate tendencies from avarice, envy, and hate, into the sacrifices of love. But the latter are equally real and immeasurably higher in value. God is in both the physical and the spiritual but he reaches the highest forms of self-expression in deeds of lofty temper rather than in the activities of the machine which our age is so prone to worship. The most important lesson mankind has yet to learn is that which will open the way to a fuller use of spiritual power and a deeper joy in its application to the problems of life. When men realize that the human soul is immeasurably more potent than any material thing, they will turn to the development of their inner resources. Ideas create machines, overturn civilizations, and map out the field of new adventures. This was what St. Teresa was thinking of in her declaration that more good is done by a minute of reciprocal, contemplative, communion of love with God than by the

founding of fifty hospitals or churches. It was not that Teresa underrated the value of healing, for she had founded hospitals herself. But she realized that one truly spiritual man is of more value to the world in the long run than the gifts of many millionaires. The one sure road to power is communion with God.

CHAPTER XX

GOD AS LIGHT

I

From immemorial time man has recognized the value of light. This in itself is enough to account for the fact that there have been so many worshipers of the sun. No wonder men turned in reverence and awe to the blazing orb that illumines their ways by day, warms the earth, and indirectly gives life to man by enabling fruit and grain to grow and ripen. Light is not another name for life but it is a necessary condition of life. Without it man's physical existence would be impossible. The food he eats to live is largely stored-up sunlight, imprisoned vibrations, which he incorporates within himself. Whatever their relation to the universe as a whole, the vibrations that jump the chasm between the sun and earth are equally essential to the life of the lowliest organism and to man.

Since this is so, it is not surprising that in imagination man has passed from the physical to the spiritual and has committed himself to an everlasting quest for more light for his mind. It matters little to him that the outside world is bright, if his soul is dark. His unceasing efforts to gain a wider knowledge bear witness to the value he places upon inward illumination. "More light, more light!" was the cry of Goethe throughout his life. And though this desire burned

more intensely in him than in most men, it is found in some degree in every normal mind.

Each day brings us face to face with new decisions that must be made. A heavy curtain hangs over the future—a curtain that will not be fully lifted until the future merges into the present and then another future will have taken its place beyond. We do not know what a day will bring forth. Yet how eagerly we scan the horizons for signs that will indicate what is going to happen. Amidst the clash of opinions in industry, politics, and religion, men everywhere believe that they are looking for light. The question of St. Thomas to Jesus, "How can we know the way?" is theirs as well, and his prayer is also theirs, "Show us the way." Their minds may be closed, but in their hearts they long to have their pathway made clear.

II

Out of this need and longing, the idea of conscience has been born. Though now far separated in meaning, conscience is closely related to science, springing as it does from the same root, and differentiated from it by its prefix. Its original meaning is joint knowledge, or knowledge with oneself, in which the self is aware of its obligations and of its faithfulness or unfaithfulness in their discharge. But since the self is rooted in God and all knowledge ultimately derives from him, it is reasonable to take the ground that conscience is the voice of God bearing witness to the reality and authority of righteousness and duty.

The word conscience is not found in the Old Testament. This is significant and is explained by the fact that in ancient Israel the seat of authority was held

by an external law. Moses and his followers did not recognize the validity of any inward voice. They would have given short shrift to modern doctrinaires who put their own opinions above the law of the state. When we pass over to the gospels, while the word does not appear, the appeal of Jesus is always to the moral sense rather than to external law. He speaks of "the light" that is in men, and his mission, as he interpreted it, was to quicken their moral perceptions and to illumine their pathway to make their duty clear. "I am the light of the world." In so far as his disciples appropriated this light, they became in turn its distributors,—*"Ye are the light of the world."*

The interests of Jesus were practical. He did not seek to formulate theories of conduct because that would lead into casuistry and debate. But later when the effects of his teaching became apparent, as we see in the Acts and the Epistles, the word conscience appears and is used frequently, particularly by St. Paul. And while it is true that the Stoics and other Greek teachers had anticipated him in using it, their treatment of the idea was abstract. Christian faith gave it a rich practical content by facing men with their moral obligations and requiring them to pass judgment upon their own actions.

III

One of our greatest needs is a religious education that will enable men to see that a proper understanding of right and wrong requires careful training and definite thought. The trouble with much of our preaching rests in its failure to show that virtue is not verbal. It is not enough to say "be good," for large numbers of

people who wish to be good do not understand wherein goodness lies in many a situation. This explains the necessity for analyzing the watchwords of our faith. We must separate them into their component parts before we can understand them. When with this intention we turn to conscience, we shall find that it is not a simple idea. In fact there are few ideas that are simple. Most of them have a history and as we trace the record back we find that the stream was augmented by many a tributary or the reverse process took place and a part of the original meaning was drawn off.

In conscience several factors have been woven together into the finished texture of the idea. The first of these is a sense of obligation which is a part of the fabric of our being and points to a divine law-giver as its source. This is definitely and explicitly taught by St. Paul in his classic statement, that "when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." ¹

In this conviction that men are everywhere responsible for their actions, the apostle's judgment is confirmed by every careful observer of human life. Revelation is much wider than the Bible. All men have received sufficient light to make them morally responsible. This revelation comes in different forms to those in different circumstances. Every experienced missionary can tell of sainted characters whom he has met in non-Christian lands—men whose virtue can not be explained on any other grounds than an instinctive recognition

¹ Romans, 2: 14-15.

of what is good and a natural desire to do it. Man is made in such a way that his highest satisfaction comes from obedience to this "inner light" which in varying degrees of clarity is given to all.

The second factor in conscience is a moral faculty which recognizes this law and inclines men to yield to its authority. Men of every degree of enlightenment see some distinction between right and wrong. Conscience is this faculty or organ through which man lays holds upon the will of God. It is reason in action. Obedience, however, is not compulsory. Man is a free agent. God never coerces him. He can always take his choice between two courses of action. On the one side is the right as he sees it in the light of the heavenly revelation; on the other side are his natural desires and inclinations. The one choice leads along an austere trail over high altitudes of duty and virtue; the other leads down an easy declivity and plunges him into the malarial marshes of selfishness and complacency.

A third element in conscience is moral judgment. As St. Paul said in the passage quoted above, "the thoughts of men accuse or excuse them." They justify or condemn themselves. This observation is supported in our experience. How often we weigh the arguments for and against any decision that we have rendered or a course that we have pursued. Conscience is a judge upon the bench, who, while perhaps striving to be as lenient as possible, nevertheless renders his decisions in accordance with the evidence and the law as he understands it.

At least one other element in conscience still remains. When the decision before the inward bar is favorable, there is elation in the mind of the accused. If he is

vindicated after taking account of all the *pros* and *cons*, in the certainty that his conscience is void of offense, he experiences an exhilaration that strengthens and buoys him up and gives him remarkable vigor to withstand opposition or persecution. This is the explanation of the power of will so often displayed by prophets and reformers. In the assurance that they are acting with undiluted motive, their strength is greatly augmented.

The converse is also true, and probably occurs more frequently, at least in the intenser forms of experience. When the verdict is adverse before the inner seat of judgment, there is a feeling of self-reproach. Who does not know what it is to have the blush of shame suffuse his cheek or to feel remorse gnawing at his heart strings? The censure of others is hard enough to bear, but self-condemnation is immeasurably harder. An innocent man of normal moral courage can stand up against a hostile world, but collapse is sure if the foundations have been undermined by a realization of his own sin. The suicide of Judas, when he saw the heinousness of his mistake in betraying Jesus is a striking illustration. So also is the trembling of Felix as St. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment; the remorse of St. Peter after his denial of his Master, and the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira.

IV

Doubtless there are other factors in the complex and delicate ensemble of qualities of which conscience is made up but they are too elusive for most minds to grasp. They are atmospheric rather than tangible, yet

they rise out of the interplay of these more obvious elements to which reference has been made in the above analysis. Nor is it necessary to discuss the question as to the methods and processes involved in the origin of conscience. There are several divergent theories upon that problem, varying from the gradual evolution of social sanctions and taboos, to the immediate and direct revelation of God. Some of those who have taken the latter position regard conscience as an infallible oracle, an intuitive discernment of the will of God. But whatever the nature and origin of the moral faculty, there can scarcely be any difference of opinion as to its authority. Even if we can give a correct naturalistic account of its rise, the fact remains that we are dealing with a world that harbored its possibility from the beginning. Whatever its origin, it is conscience still. The all-important fact is the possession of such a quality. If a man is not governed by his conscience, surely he is in a sorry state; though it be a poor guide, it is the only light we have, for if we accept the judgment of others without knowing the reason why, we abdicate the sovereignty of our souls and become slaves to their caprices.

Nor is it a valid objection to say that conscience may lead us astray. This is true, as we know from our experience which can be confirmed by any number of illustrations from history. A part of the price of liberty is the risk of going wrong. If we could be held on the right path by some external restraining influence, there would be no virtue in our goodness. It would have no body. Man is a free agent, a self-determining personality, and must be guided by his own light.

And yet, as we have already seen, this light flows from God. There is no other source. Just as the vi-

brations from the sun seek entrance to every object in their path and break through them, according to their degrees of translucency, so the light of God—the light that is God—is ever seeking entrance to the souls of men. The differences in moral judgments, which are so prevalent in our common experience, are due to the differences in the quality of men's souls. Some souls have been made opaque by sinful disregard of the light already in their possession. Others by temperament and training are capable of receiving only a limited portion of the light which falls from God. In a cathedral window each bit of glass of different color sifts out that portion of the spectrum with which it is in harmony. The other rays seek entrance in vain. So it is with the windows of the soul. Some light enters the darkest mind, but man's spiritual worth is measured by the degree of light he receives from God.

From this it should be clear why there are so many varieties of conscience. There are some that are weak and timid and others that are strong and free. The New Testament writers mention several types, the conscience void of offense, the defiled and the wounded, the good and the evil. The same variations appear in our contemporary life. Many men seem to have no scruples against certain actions that to some of their neighbors appear to be criminal. Often the distinctions of conscience are irrational. One man will feel deeper pain by far if he has been guilty of a breach of etiquette than for a violation of the moral law. Large numbers of people are filled with remorse by the recollection of a sin of passion, while remaining utterly oblivious to the far greater and chronic sins of avarice, selfishness, slander, and pride. Again conscience is arbitrary, as any student of social customs

knows. A naked woman of certain African tribes feels no shame in public if she is wearing the crude jewelry prescribed by the customs of her people, but if this is lacking she is deeply humiliated. Some farmers will allow their crops to be destroyed by rain before they will take them in on Sunday, while others of apparently equal character believe it to be their duty to save them on that day. Thus "the white radiance of eternity" is diffused and broken into varied colors as it passes through the distorting media of a multitude of minds.

v

From these considerations it will be admitted that no argument is needed to prove the necessity for the education of the moral sense. It is evident that conscience cannot be absolute and final when such contradictions are taken into account. Doubtless many of those who lit the fires of the Inquisition were as conscientious as those whom they persecuted. Somewhere, however remote from man's present moral achievement, there is a line which separates truth from error, and right from wrong. Many of our moral judgments at the best only remotely approximate this line. We are unable to follow it when it leaves the simpler for the more complex arenas of human relationship. As an illustration we may take the difficulty of applying the Golden Rule to which all men subscribe in theory. With the right will it would not be hard to apply this great principle in a simple society where all the parties concerned are related as like to like. But as Dr. Felix Adler has observed: "Men and women are unlike, adults and children are unlike, the claims and obliga-

tions on either side are unlike. The various vocations, agricultural, industrial, commercial, professional, are exercised in groups. The relations within these groups are those of the unlike to the unlike. So are nations groups; and it is just a morality of groups, both an internal morality, that of the members of the groups to one another, and an external morality, that of the groups to other groups—it is just this immense need of a morality of groups that has not been met. Where there should be definite standards there are none; where there should be ideals of behavior there is a void.”²

Hence both personally and socially one of our fundamental needs is more enlightenment. Negatively we require it to guard against injustice to ourselves. How sad it is that good men suffer needlessly and narrow their influence by a misdirected conscience! The rigorous emphasis that the Puritan ascetic and his survivors have put upon the suppression of the natural outlets of youth in innocent amusements has done religion great harm. But its most baneful effect has been upon the character of those who insisted upon such repressions, by inducing in them an unconscious pharisaism. In censuring others for sins they were not inclined to, while overlooking their own formalism and pride, they often brought upon themselves the judgment they would mete to others. Their narrowness of outlook, provincialism, intolerance, conceit of opinion, unlovableness, and eventual loss of influence were the direct fruitage of a conscience fixed upon such minor issues that it missed those of essential moment. A classic illustration is Roger Chillingworth, the persecutor of Hester Prynne in “The Scarlet Letter.”

² Felix Adler, “The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal,” page 26.

The New Testament implies, if it does not directly teach, the possibility of educating the conscience. St. Paul confessed that he "exercised himself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." The letter to the Hebrews speaks of those "who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." But we hardly need these sanctions for a conclusion that is self-evident and reached by common sense. Growth is one of the most fundamental laws of the universe. Men grow in their grasp of truth, in wisdom, in insight, and every other quality of mind and heart. There is no obvious reason that conscience should be an exception to this rule. "My conscience is not so" was the answer of Mary Queen of Scots, to John Knox. "Conscience, Madame," he replied, "requires knowledge; and I fear that right knowledge ye have none." With increasing knowledge comes the opportunity for a better conscience. Ignorance and narrow-mindedness denature the moral sense. As St. Paul said of those who ate meat offered to idols in the belief that they were to derive peculiar benefit from it: "There is not in every man that knowledge; for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."

More light is essential to the cure of a weak conscience, for the basis of this argument is that conscience is the organ of God, who is light. Hence the larger measure of light it assimilates, the more effectively it works. This light comes from many sources. All experience is a channel along which its vibrations flow. The whole field of biography and history offers its tribute. But in the Bible, and particularly in the gospels of Christ, we have an unfailing source of illumina-

tion. There the fundamental laws which govern the soul of man in all its relations and purposes are revealed in so rich a variety of aspects and with such fullness of detail, that the chance of error is reduced to a minimum on the part of any one who tries honestly to learn.

This illumination is, however, much more than an intellectual process. There must be obedience to the light we have or it will be lost. If St. Paul had disobeyed the "heavenly vision," he would soon have sunk to the common level and his name would never have been known. The explanation of many a weak conscience is found in the failure of the will to follow its lead. Disposition, desire, habit, and ambition must be brought into subjection to it, or its light fades out into darkness. Once a student in a momentary spurt of resolution bought an alarm clock and set it for an early hour. The next morning, as it rang, he was awakened suddenly and fully by its clarion call, but remembering the wealth of time he had before him, instead of getting up, he turned over in bed and was soon fast asleep. The second morning he was roused again, though not completely, with the same action on his part. But the third morning he did not hear the alarm. So it is with the warnings of conscience. They must be obeyed or the organ itself becomes numb and ineffective.

A clear-sighted and sensitive conscience is an essential mark of the highest manhood. The unity of faith which the apostle foresaw will not be realized until men universally, through faithful response to the spirit of truth, have developed a pure, sharply defined, and enlightened moral sense, both individually and socially. Particularly among the leaders in every phase of activ-

ity, the powers of conscious reasoning will have to be nurtured before there can be social and international justice and good will. But education is not enough. Only in the consciousness of God's presence is the path of duty made plain. "In thy light shall we see light." Conscience is the apprehension of God as righteousness and when God is thus apprehended, its former feeble testimony becomes definite, its perverted moral decisions are rectified, its knowledge is clarified, and its judgment strengthened. The register of the worth of any man's conscience is determined by the measure of his communion with God. Hence it is the truth to say that Christ is the conscience of the Christian. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." As men accept and appropriate the light he offers, they share his knowledge of what is good and beautiful and true, and make his purpose their own.

Since man's highest good can only be realized in right relation to his fellows, it is plain that their witness and influence hold a large place in the development of conscience which is therefore never purely individual. The home, the church, the school, the state, the shop, the factory, and finance—all work together in the making of the moral sense. The light of God is mediated through these institutions. Conscience is the organ through which the social judgment upon questions of right and wrong becomes articulate. Hence when a man's conscience is in open antagonism to the prevalent ideas of his time, as in the case of the thoroughgoing pacifist or other reformer, he should do all in his power to keep an open mind and always be ready to reconsider his judgments. But even when he remains convinced that he is right and stands up against

his generation, his only justification for diverging from the conscience of his fellows is the conviction that his testimony is in accord with the actual and essential truth that underlies their institutions, which somehow or other they are failing to express. Conscience is the light of the Eternal seeking to unite mankind in the great coöperative commonwealth on the basis of justice and love. "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

CHAPTER XXI

GOD AS TRUTH

I

According to no less an authority than Bacon, Pilate was jesting when, at the trial of Jesus, he asked his famous question: "What is truth?" But Bacon is wrong: Pilate was serious. He was not lacking in intellectual perception and the question he raised is one of the profoundest that has ever puzzled the mind of man. Philosophers, scientists, and thinkers have striven for ages to define truth—to find the line between it and error, to fix upon its ultimate limits. But while much light has been thrown upon Pilate's question, it has yet to be satisfactorily answered.

The plain man doubtless fails to realize the complexity of the question, but his first instinctive step toward its answer is in the right direction. He believes that truth is what corresponds to fact. How many sheep are in yonder flock? He counts them and finds that there are seventy-two. Yet this numerical idea, accurate though it is, represents but a single aspect of the truth about the sheep. Many other questions remain unsettled, including their breed, ownership, value, health, age, and history. For practical purposes we do not require to answer most of these questions; but they serve to suggest the vastness of our lack of knowledge upon a multitude of important matters. So little do we know of the complex forces that enter into the framework and composition of the world and of ourselves,

that we have not the basis for true opinions upon many problems, so that our ideas correspond only to fragmentary aspects of reality. How often we offer judgments, without serious reflection, upon questions remote from our immediate experience! We base wide generalizations upon a few particulars, as when we say we do not like the men of this or that nationality, because the half dozen whom we have met are objectionable to us.

But erroneous judgments are not only the result of ignorance. There is another factor—the will to believe. This volitional element in our nature is aroused by our interests, or what we believe to be our interests. Many a false opinion owes its seat in the mind to the fact that it is in harmony with the traditions, prejudices, and sentiments, we have inherited or received by contagion from those whose general outlook we share. During a war in which our country is engaged every national of the enemy is stigmatized as a villain. Our minds are not open to the suggestion that the enemy has a case, or to the possibility that we may be wrong. But even in times when the emotional strain is reduced to a minimum, it is only by the exercise of the strongest precautions that we can be whole-hearted in our desire for truth. We are asked to give our support to a cause: we express warm hospitality to the idea and deep regret that we have neither time nor strength to aid it. Then a friend invites us to take a trip around the world at his expense and we accept, though our acceptance involves a complete dislocation of the routine of our existence.

Such considerations indicate how difficult it is to be loyal even to the truth that we can see if we look for it. The escape from false belief is not easy and re-

quires every psychological device we can command including among others, careful consideration of evidence, suspension of judgment, abolition of prejudice, and clarity of thought. Unfortunately most people are unwilling to pay so large a price for truth, nor do they see the necessity of doing so. Their decisions are emotional, and the emotions make poor judges. One of the most pathetic experiences for a thoughtful and conscientious man is to watch a religious assembly registering its opinions upon some matter of fact. There is rarely any disposition to study the situation and weigh the evidence. Usually there is little desire to do justice to those on the opposite side. The Bible is inerrant! All who question this dogma are enemies of the faith! When the feelings reach a high tension, the vote is taken. The majority is in the affirmative and a great victory won. No argument is needed to show the judicious that this is not the path to truth.

But even when we hold our feelings in restraint and faithfully record our observations, it is plain that we are simply rectifying our previous errors and approximating reality more closely. No wise man believes that he can escape altogether from error, or grasp the truth in its fullness, since its forms are always changing. He knows that his clearest ideas do not conform altogether to outward things and that even though they did, he might still be far from knowing all the truth about them. To know the truth, we must come into living possession of it.

II

Somewhere, in the tangled skein of motives and passions which make up the vast complex of life, the line

of truth runs; and, where the mind can follow it, error becomes that far impossible; just as it is impossible to hold that a thing is less or more than the sum of all its parts. That it is difficult to find this line in many a situation is proved by the passionate conflicts of opinion which so often occur owing to partial views of reality. In many cases men believe that they know the truth, even though their equally reasonable neighbors take an opposite position. Obviously two opposing creeds cannot both be right, though it is usually a fact that neither is wholly wrong. To many, this is painfully confusing. They crave so ardently for certainty, however irrational, that they are willing to accept the spurious assurances of any charlatan who tells them what they wish to believe. This explains the power of the dogmatist. The man who paints in black and white only is sure of a far wider suffrage than that of his competitor who blends his colors and modifies his effects. Yet the latter is much nearer than the former to the heart of truth, though it always seems to be eluding him.

In this very elusiveness, however, lies the fascination of the search for truth. If truth were a commodity that could be weighed and measured like gold or silver, there would be no virtue in its possession. As it is, every man has to fare forth on its quest like Sir Galahad on his search for the Holy Grail. If the choice between truth and the search for it were given to any wise man, with Huxley he would choose the exhilaration of seeking to find it. The delight of its discovery is forever fresh and intense. This is the reward, the hope of which has been the dynamic that has prompted millions of daring souls to explore the ocean of ignorance which surrounds the little island of our knowl-

edge, with the result that this island is always enlarging, and encroaching upon the infinite.

The guiding principle of the world's pioneers in every department of action has been this desire to make new discoveries, not as ends in themselves, but that the path of destiny may be illumined. Thus Huxley stated his objective in life in the following words which are equally descriptive of every other seeker for truth:

To promote the increase of natural knowledge and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is when the garment of make-believe by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features is stripped off.¹

The explanation of this hunger for truth which has characterized the finest minds of every age is God. Man's relationship with him is so intimate that the divine qualities are forever seeking entrance into, and expression through, his life. This entrance is possible only where there is some acuteness of sensibility. A strong desire for truth is relatively rare, for truth leads its devotees a long, hard journey, and demands many a sacrifice of personal interest. Popularity is one of truth's greatest foes, for the populace does not want the truth, and to retain its esteem it is always necessary to descend to the level of the thought of the crowd and to conform to its standards. This subjects

¹ T. H. Huxley, "Method and Results," D. Appleton & Company, p. 16.

many men who should be leaders to a temptation they cannot withstand. The artist, politician, preacher, or writer, whose primary thought is popularity, prostitutes his gifts, and becomes a liability instead of an asset in the forward movement of truth. Sad though the admission, this is nowhere more evident than in the leadership of the church. The private opinions of the clergy upon controversial issues are much more liberal than their registered votes would indicate. Many of them are so afraid of the loss of their emoluments or of preferment that they are often dragooned into voting against their consciences.

Yet the hope of mankind is in the men who are willing "to follow the gleam" because in so doing they are following God. He is truth in its totality, and though the price he requires for the acquisition of himself in even a modest degree by the individual soul is high, in the end truth is always a better investment than error or delusion and the blunders that arise from them. The martyrs of religion and science attest this fact. They are the beacon lights of history because they remained steadfast in their pursuit of their ideal; while their most gifted contemporaries, who yielded to the temptation to compromise for the immediate prizes of life, were forgotten in a generation.

III

No more pregnant and far-reaching words were ever uttered than those of Jesus to his disciples: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The measure of man's freedom is the measure of truth in his possession. In a fundamental aspect, history is the record of the struggle for freedom. Liberty is

one of the most precious ideas within the range of the human mind. From the dawn of recorded time, and perhaps before, man has been ceaseless in his effort to shake himself free from the tyrannous grip of many masters. Sometimes these over-lords have held him in physical bondage, as the Egyptians held the Israelites, or the southern planters, the negro. Sometimes they have been evil spirits in whom he has believed, or arbitrary rulers in church or state who have denied him intellectual freedom.

The struggle for a free stage is an illustration, as is also the struggle which Milton voiced for uncensored printing. Men so quickly take new privileges for granted that they as quickly forget their former disabilities. This explains why we ignore or underrate the price that has been paid for our present measure of freedom. It is difficult to mention a single privilege that was not won after a long, sacrificial struggle. Popular franchise, the public school, free roads, the right of assembly, the right of worship according to the forms of our own choice, the right not to worship—these are a few random examples of liberties won against arrogant masters who succeeded long in withholding them. There is an ingrained intolerance in the human mind which insists upon conformity when it is possessed of authority. Democracy has partially distributed authority and has therefore freed modern man from a portion of the yoke which his fathers bore without complaint, and often without any suspicion that it was unjust.

Freedom, however, does not stop with physical emancipation, or the attainment of those material advantages which justice requires. By far the larger part of life is spiritual. The mind and heart seek for

liberation. Multitudes of the human race are still cowed by evil spirits or confined within restricted areas by tradition and superstition. They are the bond servants of ignorance, prejudice, and bigotry. They often stand in their own light and tie more firmly the knots that bind them. Their minds are shackled by fear and irrational authority. How pathetic it is that in an age of science there are vast numbers of people who believe that it is sinful to eat meat on Friday, but that it is virtuous to eat eggs or fish! There are still many who plant potatoes by the light of the moon because they believe that this will ensure a better crop than if it is done by day. Many still think that an accident is a proof of God's disapproval, and therefore a punishment for some sin known or unknown. Again there are those who are cramped by their sectarian narrowness, in politics, industry, or religion. They look upon all who do not share their convictions as enemies, and thus close the door to the enriching influences that would enter their lives from a free interchange of ideas with men of different traditions.

From every such limitation, a knowledge of truth offers emancipation. Ignorance not only fetters the mind but limits the area of human action. When men did not know the principle of flotation, they could not cross a lake or river that was too wide for them to swim. But the knowledge that a hollow log will not only float, but will also carry a heavy load, has for ages enabled them to move freely across wide expanses of water and also to take their goods and their families with them. Knowledge of electricity has abolished time and distance in sending messages over the world. Knowledge of medicine has extended life far beyond its average limits, when men were groping in the dark

toward a better understanding of the laws of health. Knowledge of metallurgy and of engineering has made possible our great systems of transportation on land and sea, and all the other vehicles of modern civilization. Science, which is another name for ordered knowledge, lights and heats our homes, registers our thought, and banishes disease; in so doing it frees us from many a limitation of time and space.

To know the truth is to have a living grip upon reality. This is always a liberating experience. For ages many delusions have held men in narrow prison-houses. The walls of prejudice, fear, and misunderstanding, that we build around ourselves, are no less irksome because they are of our own rearing. How limited is the outlook of the man who lives in the illusion that his own sect or party has a prior lien upon God's favor! He loses the mellowing enrichment of soul that arises from contact with others of different outlook. His obstructed vision throws him back upon himself and those of like opinions. His mental processes become hardened as a result of this suppression of his sympathetic and adventurous impulses, and he loses the capacity to enlarge his horizons.

It is noteworthy that in the popular catalogue of sins, narrowness of mind rarely finds a place. Yet a large part of the injustice and consequent friction and social distemper suffered by mankind is due to the intolerance that denies to others rights which men claim for themselves. Bigotry in politics, religion, and race, with all its attendant evils, grows out of the root idea that God is partisan and shares the prejudices of men. The average American or Englishman can scarcely understand the statement that the Japanese or Chinese people are potentially equal in ability and virtue to the

Anglo-Saxons. Such a suggestion is beyond the pale of his imagination. The superiority of the Nordic race is taken as axiomatic. Any one who doubts it is looked upon as insane, or at least as unstable in his thought. This is the true church—the loyal party—God's own country—the orthodox faith: from all such narrowness of outlook the truth sets men free and enables them to appreciate not only the good in those with whom they disagree, but also to understand the causes which have made them what they are. Such appreciation and understanding dissolve prejudice and the hatred which is the fruit of prejudice.

Another delusion, chosen at random, from which mankind must be liberated, is the false idea that goodness consists in negations. Popular Christianity was dominated for centuries by this erroneous conviction which still survives in many minds. To dance, to play cards, to wear jewelry, to drink wine, to attend the theater, to read prayers, to have instrumental music or to sing hymns in worship—these are but a few of the taboos that have exercised a tyrannous influence over vast numbers of people. This is not to deny that there is a negative aspect to religion and morals, but all sense of proportion is lost when negations are lifted to a dominant place. Moreover, when the emphasis is put upon a taboo, it tends to make men formal in their religious experience, and therefore to develop a self-righteous spirit. The Pharisees came under the censure of Jesus because in their self-satisfaction in keeping the law, which many of them did with remarkable sincerity and precision, they overlooked the one essential thing—a right spirit. Many a man has suffered censure and ostracism for violating some irrational

taboo, such as playing the violin, as George Macdonald has described so graphically in "David Elginbrod."

A well-known fundamentalist clergyman of the present day, who is notorious for his zeal as a defender of the faith, and who was reared in a small sect which has many taboos, has told of his emotions on entering a Presbyterian church one Easter Sunday, when he was a boy. To his horror, he saw that the chancel was decorated with flowers; he felt that every sanctity was being violated by the beauty of the scene, and he was certain that his presence in such a place would bring dire punishment upon him. Such were also the feelings of Dr. Algernon Crapsey, in different circumstances, when, as a youth of fifteen, he entered a theater in Cincinnati. "I took fifty cents of my hard-earned wages and, buying a ticket, entered 'the gateway of hell,' as I had heard a preacher call it. I entered with fear and trembling, my conscience ringing its warning bell so that I could hear nothing else!"²

It is difficult for those who have any gift of analysis to understand such distortions of the values of life. They have arisen through the innate tendency in human nature to elevate the inconsequential that happens to be near at hand to a place of eminence, and thus to obscure the important which is further away. Knowledge of the truth alone gives the perspective that enables its possessor to guard against the grievous blunders growing out of the idea that a virtuous soul is to be achieved by refraining from certain proscribed actions.

Popular belief in the wisdom of majorities is also a delusion which impedes the free working of man's

² "The Last of the Heretics," A. G. Crapsey.

mind. While for practical purposes, we have to count votes in reaching a decision as to any proposed legislative or other social action, those who are gifted with discernment always understand that a decision based upon a popular majority is usually only a rough approximation to the best course evident to the best minds of the time. Such decisions are always in process of amendment as new light comes. In fact, the vote of the one man who knows is worth that of millions who do not know. Galileo was right; though the world was against him.

Thus we might go on enumerating the many directions in which the human soul needs a larger freedom of action. There is the delusion that happiness can be obtained by purchase; that material safety can be assured; that exclusiveness gives distinction; and that the mind can be forced into belief by authority. This last is perhaps one of the most damaging of all erroneous convictions, for it leads into a large number of blind alleys. It is thought that compulsory military service will make patriots. Yet the Scots who bled with Wallace, the Swiss who fought with Winkelried, and the Italians who starved with Garibaldi, gave their love and their lives freely. Compulsory saluting of the flag and compulsory reciting by school children of the American version of all the wars that we have fought are equally futile. So also is the attempt often made by ecclesiastical courts to restore the Inquisition and force men to suppress their beliefs and conform to dogmas that are no longer tenable by the educated mind. The one way of escape from these false trails, which all lead into a slough of despond, is a larger knowledge of what is true.

No attempt has been made here to give an exhaustive

catalogue of erroneous and false opinions that hold the mind of man in bondage. Millenarianism, however, deserves some mention, as an illustration. Large numbers of devout people spend much time and energy in the fatuous task of looking for signs of an impending physical return of Christ, who, in their belief, is to establish an earthly capital and to rule the faithful in a perfect theocracy for a thousand years. This apparently innocent and naïve idea is unfortunately associated with the most pessimistic of philosophies. Before Christ can return to earth, mankind must sink into a fathomless abyss of degradation. This will prepare the way for Christ's coming and will justify him in declaring the world in a state of bankruptcy, so hopeless, that utter destruction of all except the faithful few will be the only way to liquidate its affairs.

Those who are committed to this pessimistic denial of God's wisdom and power, which in one form or another was held by many of the ancients, base their arguments largely upon the books of Daniel and Revelation, and other apocryphal portions of Scripture. They are oblivious to the historical fact that these books were admitted to the canon only after a struggle, centuries in duration. With glaring inconsistency, they ignore the wonderfully clear and practical teaching of Jesus, and seek for cryptic and allegorical meanings in records that are altogether different in their original intention. Nero is swept across the ages and by a startling legerdemain is transmuted into the Kaiser. Armageddon is any war that happens to be going on. The scarlet woman, or the beast of the book of Revelation, is the Pope. Such are some of the grotesque interpretations, which those who suffer from this delusion offer to explain current events, and which they

affirm are signs and portents of the impending catastrophic change that will overturn the world and issue in the utter destruction of all who have not accepted this esoteric and grotesque travesty of the gospel.

From a widely different point of view, there is another delusion which exercises a blighting influence upon numbers of the young in our generation. This is the false idea that intellectual emancipation allows and justifies a large measure of self-indulgence. But though a platitude we dare not forget that liberty is not license. The truth does not free men from the rule of the moral law. On the contrary, freedom consists in knowledge of and obedience to that law. Admittedly, the problem is complicated by the fact that there is often difference of opinion as to what the law is. Sometimes the traditional sanctions are in need of amendment, modification, or restatement. But the purpose of freedom is not to remove moral restraints: it is rather to release the soul for wider and holier action. To be freed from belief in fiery punishment is to gain the enrichment of soul which comes from a deeper insight into the character of God. To use such liberating knowledge for the gratification of selfish desires, without fear of consequences, is to prostitute the purpose for which it is given. Yet that is what a host of people are doing. Realizing that "the Sabbath was made for man," they turn it into a day of idle pleasure. Having learned that there is no rational basis for many of their inherited traditional prohibitions, they go to the opposite extreme and seem to lose all sense of spiritual responsibility. Only vital possession of the truth of God will keep men free from this error, which is more damaging in its effects than a puritanical narrowness of outlook.

IV

No matter how wide a man's range of knowledge is, or how sincere his desire to know the truth, in mental outlook, and more particularly in his subconscious mind, there will be evidences of his need of liberation from delusions of various kinds. Even though in theory he believes that Christianity is democratic in its genius, he will probably have a feeling of superiority over men who differ from him in faith, race, education, social position, or color. Our inheritance is too vast in content, too complex in its nature, and too tremendous in its inertia, to make escape from its determining ideas, whatever their falsity, easy or sure. Sustained and constant effort to find the truth in thought and action is the only guaranty against the ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, which narrowed the outlook of our forbears.

Fortunately we have the innate conviction that truth *is*. Sooner or later it will come to its own: in fact it is always coming to its own—slowly but inevitably. Though “forever on the scaffold,” it determines the direction of the future. The permanent value of any man is measured by the proportion of truth which he expresses in thought and deed. The goal for us all should be the elimination from our minds of as much of error as is possible. This can be achieved only by a clear presentation of truth. All that is needed to banish falsehood is to state the truth. Then its victory is certain. Many good folk go through life in sorrow and discontent because they are of the opinion that truth is being vanquished. They are wrong who believe thus; let them go to Milton and imbibe his faith:

And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth to be put to the worse, in a free and open encounter? . . . For who knows not that truth is strong, next to the Almighty; she needs no policies nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defenses that error uses against her power: give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps.³

God is truth: the deep of the Eternal calling to the deep in man, and finding in man the channel of its thought. Truth is constant, favoring none save those whose souls respond to its caressing appeal. The deepest need of the human race is a greater capacity for the embrace of truth. This can be realized only by being hospitable to every new light that breaks upon our vision. Men must be ready to go where truth calls, or they will lose the capacity to distinguish between truth and error. Nor is there any reason to shrink from the payment of this price.

It fortifies my soul to know
That though I perish, truth is so;
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.⁴

The life of any man will be vastly enlarged and intensified when he learns the joy of pursuing truth. To

³ John Milton: "Areopagitica."

⁴ Arthur Hugh Clough.

have a final revelation complete in all details upon which to rest would rob life of its richest flavor. This explains why God has put us in a complex world and left us to discover so many of its secrets. "I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now." Truth is ever being born anew in the human mind. The old forms die, but the spirit remains and is invested with new shapes. In the manifold relationships of life, man comes nearer to truth as he approaches in mind and spirit the ideas and ideals of Christ: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." In so far as man incarnates truth, he fulfills his highest destiny by glorifying and enjoying God.

CHAPTER XXII

GOD AS LAW

I

"A law, in the most general and comprehensive acceptation in which the term, in its literal meaning is employed, may be said to be a rule laid down for the guidance of an intelligent being by an intelligent being having power over him."¹

This is the definition of John Austin, who is perhaps the most luminous English writer on jurisprudence. Austin also observes that where there is a *command*, a corresponding *duty* is explicit or implicit. He derived his idea of law from Hobbes, who in the 17th century had elaborated a theory of paternal government which went so far as to make the king the judge of the religious and moral, as well as of the social and political, conduct of his subjects. Owing to the rise of the democratic ideal, this doctrine was impossible in the 19th century; but Austin, with flexible mind, overcame the difficulty by transferring sovereignty from a person to parliament. Since, however, a command is of no value unless there is power to put it into effect, Austin included a sanction or penalty for disobedience as an integral element of his idea.

It is evident from this epitome of Austin's work that in his definition there is no place left for law in

¹ "Lectures on Jurisprudence," 4th ed., London, 1879.

the scientific sense in which the word is so widely used to-day. In fact, he goes on to say that this usage rests upon a slender analogy and is merely metaphorical or figurative. "Such is the case when we talk of *laws* observed by the lower animals; of *laws* regulating the growth or decay of vegetables; of *laws* determining the movements of inanimate bodies or masses."² "To use the word 'law' where there are not intelligence, reason, and will, is a flagrant misapplication of the meaning of the term with the result that the field of jurisprudence and morals has been deluged with muddy speculation."³

There is no denying that much confusion has arisen owing to the use of the same word to express ideas that are entirely different in meaning. A law in the scientific sense is absolute and remains the same for all normal minds. That an unsupported body which is heavier than air will fall to the ground is as true in Peking as it is in Philadelphia. On the other hand, a law in the legal or moral sense may be amended at any time; in fact, one of the chief tasks of parliaments is to modify, or abrogate, laws already in existence. Nowhere is this principle more distinctly illustrated than in the attitude of Jesus toward the Jewish law. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." Not only do the civil and moral codes of different communities differ from one another; they also change in accordance with changing knowledge and conditions; what is regarded as legal in one generation is branded as illegal in another.

² *Ibid.*³ *Ibid.*

But like all simple explanations of what is in reality complex, Austin's idea of law as a rule of conduct given by a sovereign to a subject overlooks certain essential factors, as several recent writers have pointed out. Many of the rules which society obeys without question are the outgrowth of instinctive habits and not of explicit commands. They are accepted as readily by the political superior as by the political inferior. In their embryonic stages they can be recognized in the customs of birds and gregarious animals. The late W. H. Hudson told some striking stories of the insistence of rooks upon fair play in their social relations. In one case that he observed a large flock went so far as to ostracize an offending pair who tried to find a short-cut to their nest building by stealing sticks from a neighboring nest.

Moreover, there are many acts which are not illegal in the sense that there is any statute against them, but which are no less rigorously disallowed. Violations of "good form" in social intercourse are, it is true, not followed by any material penalty like a fine or imprisonment, but a hostile public opinion is equally effective in censuring and generally preventing them. Thus, entirely apart from the laws laid down by sovereigns or parliaments, it is evident that society could not hold together without certain regulations to curb and direct the wills of its individual members. Without such limitations anarchy would ensue. All social organization implies the existence of rules to regulate the relations existing among different individuals and groups. As the human body has a bony frame around which it is organized, and without which it would be a shapeless mass, there are certain regulatory principles by

which society is held together and without which it could not function.

II

These considerations enable the modern student of jurisprudence to make a distinction that was still beyond the horizon of Austin a century ago. This distinction is the difference between a law and a statute. The legislators of the United States have a remarkable gift for manufacturing statutes under the misapprehension that they are making law. This is often done with little consideration of the statutes already in existence, so that there is frequently an inherent inconsistency between the new enactments and the old. Multitudes of people think that the only thing necessary to correct an injustice is "to pass a law" to cover the case. But as a matter of fact, a law is not a *law* if it is inconsistent with the body of real law already in existence, and if it is not in harmony with the will of society, or is at variance with the social genius, it will eventually have to be rescinded.

But surely it is reasonable to suppose that somewhere in our plastic human nature—waiting for recognition—is buried the line that separates justice and injustice, truth and error. If this is so, every wise amendment of laws already in existence and every addition to them should be a step toward the discovery of this ideal line. But the converse is also true. A statute which runs counter to the popular will, and therefore does not receive the moral support of the average man, is not a law in the true sense of the word, and has the bad effect of bringing true law into disrespect. Prohibi-

tion of the liquor traffic is an illustration. In many sections of the country the eighteenth amendment of the Constitution of the United States does not express the conviction of the majority of the people with the result that it is flagrantly disobeyed and is thus provocative of lawlessness.

If we are correct in the assumption that all customs, moral laws, and statutory enactments, are approximations—some of which are crude and some refined—toward the ultimate righteousness inherent in the constitution of the world, then it would seem that we are justified in taking the ground that there is not any essential difference between civil or moral law on the one side, and scientific law on the other. That a man shall not kill, steal, or bear false witness without suffering certain definite penalties or disabilities is as objective a truth as the fact enunciated by Boyle that the volume of gas is inversely proportioned to the pressure to which it is subjected.

III

With the rise and development of science during the last three centuries, the idea of natural law has come to have a controlling place in modern thought. Here the present outlook is in sharp contrast with that of the ancients who had only glimpses of the reign of law: though Lucretius and other Romans used the expression "law of nature," having borrowed it from the Greeks, yet the idea lacked precision in their minds. To the church fathers the sequences of nature meant the ordinary modes of divine action to which exceptions might be made if they seemed advisable. Yet however hazy the modern man may be in his notion

of the meaning of law, it exercises a constant pressure upon his thought—a pressure that often amounts to control. This is shown in the increasing difficulty that the modern man finds in dealing with the miraculous. Miracles were not so long ago regarded as one of the great assets of faith; to-day numbers of devout men regard them as a liability because so many of them seem to be crowded out of the sphere of possibility by law. Our forbears had no difficulty in believing that the sun stood still in the heavens in order to give time to the Israelites to win a battle; but any one who has grasped the fact that the sun's location in the heavens, relative to the earth, is determined by the earth's two-fold motion upon its axis and its orbit, is obviously in a different position. It would seem that the sudden application of so vast an amount of energy would dislocate the machinery of the universe. Furthermore, it is the earth and not the sun that moves.

The sway of law impinges upon every aspect of our life. Stones always fall unless they are held in place; water always seeks the lowest level, congeals at a certain temperature and expands in the process; the sun rises and sets each day of the year at a definite and predictable moment. Winter follows autumn, and spring, winter; man is born of woman, grows from infancy through childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to maturity; then passes down the western slope of life to his inevitable grave. These are illustrations taken at haphazard, but they can be multiplied until the whole ambit of experience has been traced. Natural law in its simpler sense is represented in such sequences.

The method of science is to gather together all the available facts about any given problem—then to clas-

sify them, and to compare their relationship of space and time, and to find, if possible, a brief statement which covers the whole range of phenomena involved. Thus the law of gravitation is a formula which makes no attempt to explain but only to describe the way in which the universe is held together from the remotest atom drifting in the wind to the largest of the suns. Karl Pearson, the distinguished mathematician, goes so far as to say that Newton did not so much discover as *create* the law of gravitation:

We are thus to understand by a law of science, i.e., by a "law of nature," a *résumé* in mental shorthand, which replaces for us a lengthy description of the sequences among our sense-impressions. Law in the scientific sense is thus essentially a product of the human mind and has no meaning apart from man. It owes its existence to the creative power of the intellect. There is more meaning in the statement that man gives laws to Nature than in the converse that Nature gives laws to man.⁴

Common sense, however, recoils from so extreme a position, though it admits the part played by the human mind in discovering the relations of things. Most men who are lacking in special metaphysical gifts will continue to see in the world about them evidences of an inherent order, so definite as to be inescapable. The so-called chemical elements are an illustration. All the matter of the universe varying from a human body to a fixed star may be resolved by analysis into certain combinations of some of the elemental substances which are related to one another in an apparently ir-

⁴ "The Grammar of Science," 2d ed., London, 1900, p. 87.

refragable system. Surely the human mind did not create this system. The fact that it is the same for all people of normal intelligence is a proof that the relationship exists among the elements themselves. By the use of the spectroscope it can be shown that Arc-turus is composed of the same substances as the earth. Nothing that man can think, say, or do, will change that fact. It is written into the constitution of the uni-verse. This is also true of the relations of numbers. How many minutes are there in a thousand years? There is an exact answer. Nor does it alter the sig-nificance of the question to admit that a minute or even a year is an arbitrary unit of time.

Through methods and processes which the scientist now has at his command, it has become possible to measure the staggering distances separating the earth and millions of the stars. The sun is 855,000 miles in diameter but Antares is 400 times larger than the sun. Knowledge of such facts has been attained only because of the uniformity of nature—the fact that it is con-sistent with itself—and under the same conditions al-ways gives the same answers to the same questions. If nature were essentially capricious, science would be im-possible and the concept of law a chimera.

IV

No man of devout and thoughtful mind can reflect upon the meaning of such facts as we have been con-sidering without being conscious that he has been con-templating God himself. The law which is exhibited in the integrity of the universe must be divine in its origin and nature. It is God in the more impersonal aspects of his being. In essence it is the same whether

formulated in the words of Jesus—"with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again,"—or in the words of Newton, Mendel, Clerk-Maxwell, or Einstein. The difference lies in the sphere of application. A bridge whose engineer has disregarded the laws of strain will collapse; so also will a life which has disregarded the eternal principles of righteousness. Whether customs, sovereigns, parliaments, or scientists have formulated the laws is of only secondary interest—they all are derived from God and are emanations of his will. The hairs of our heads are numbered; not a sparrow falls to the ground without registration. Every action produces an equal and contrary reaction whether in physics or in morals. To understand the significance of such facts as these, which in their totality would include the universe itself, is to have some comprehension of the austere and rigorous integrity of God. Law is the frame of the universe—its skeletal structure—in all of its aspects, material, intellectual, and spiritual; it must be obeyed or disaster will ensue, not through any lack of the divine mercy, but for the reason that sanction is inherent in its genius.

It is as reasonable to deny that the sun is shining as to hope to avoid the rule of law. To assert that seven times seven are less or more than forty-nine, and to act upon the assertion, is sure to bring disappointment. Nothing can flourish which is untrue at the core. The musician who violates the law of pitch makes discord instead of harmony. The artist who disobeys the law of color fails to express his thought in terms of beauty, and expresses it inadequately. This is equally true in morals, though the lack of an objective standard in many spheres of activity makes it difficult to see. But this lack is gradually being overcome. Ignorance and

stupidity are slowly yielding place to a clearer understanding of the divine laws of conduct. Ever since the rise of Protestantism morality has been interpreted largely in negations; many activities have been prohibited which are innocent or inconsequential. Concurrently fundamental things have often been overlooked. The labor of poor children in the textile mills of the industrial nations is one of the darkest crimes that man in his greed has ever committed against his weak and unprotected fellows. Yet for the first century after the rise of the industrial system, this crime went on unrebuked by the leaders of the church who spent much of their time and energy in denouncing the theater, dancing, Sabbath visiting, the wearing of jewelry, and other peccadillos, fancied or real. "Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith."

But there is a continual growth in discrimination. We can not imagine the clergy of any city to-day becoming excited as did the clergy of Boston and other New England cities at the beginning of the eighteenth century, because the boys had taken to cutting off their hair and wearing wigs. One of the ministers of Boston went to the home of a boy in his congregation who had cut off his hair and in the presence of his mother remonstrated with the erring youth. He told him that wigs had been condemned by a meeting of ministers in Northampton and begged him to read the tenth chapter of the third book of Calvin's "Institutes." He concluded his rebuke in these words: "God seems to have ordained our hair as a kind of test to see whether we will be content at his finding, or whether we will be our own carvers, and come no more at him." We have

only to recall this accusation of disobedience to the divine law to realize that there has been progress in discernment of what the law is. But such a recollection should also warn us against the dogmatic censure of present changes in manners or thought in which we are apt to engage, for it suggests that our knowledge is also likely to prove to be only provisional.

Beyond the zone of positive law, where definite and reasonable enactments prescribe how we shall act, there is a wide area of choice in which there is no external compulsion. This is where spontaneity, originality, and enthusiasm are born. Yet even here, it would be wrong to say that there is no rule of conduct—no ultimate standard of right action. There is always an ideal. Here we are in the realm of manners and good taste; many of their sanctions are unenforceable; the observance of their demands depends upon ourselves alone. To choose the best is the only way to a rich and mature personality and there is always a best, though it may be hidden for the time in the mists of ignorance, prejudice, and immaturity. Our task is to clear away these mists to discover where the best lies, that our lives may conform to the ideal. And the surest and shortest way to the fulfillment of that task is to obey the light we already see—to work in harmony with the essential law of the universe.

V

Our approach to God in this study of law has been indirect, yet it has brought us continually into his presence. If men could only be made to realize that always when they act contrary to their sense of right, they are in open antagonism to God, how much more

careful they would be in their conduct! In the deepest sense, law cannot be broken, but it always breaks those who do not work in harmony with it. This is what makes disrespect for law so serious a matter in American life. Large numbers of people are prone to forget that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." For the law is inexorable and eternal; if it should fail, the universe would return to chaos.

Man's highest and only satisfying destiny consists in obedience to the law, for in so doing, he is obeying God. Here it is scarcely necessary to say that no blind subservience to an external rule is set up as the ideal. This was where so many of the contemporaries of Jesus failed. To them obedience to law meant merely the formal observance of outward rules of conduct. They believed that with the faithful discharge of these obligations, their duty was done; in reality it had only begun. Hence St. Paul defined the law in the Biblical sense of the word as "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." As we have seen, beyond these primary injunctions such as paying our bills and telling the truth, and fulfilling our religious duties, there is a vast theater of action where obedience is not enforced, except as a man enforces it upon himself, and thus enters into the law of liberty.

The older and narrower idea of the law has only a small place in the New Testament. This does not mean that either Jesus or St. Paul disregarded or discounted the imperative rule of righteousness. Doubtless Kant in his feeling of awe aroused by the contemplation of the moral law was in harmony with both Master and interpreter. But the essence of law is much too refined to be expressed in any code: it is an effluence, a

spirit, a controlling will, and obedience in the fullest sense means the coördination of the human and divine motives, and the liberation of man's highest powers in the process. For only by obedience to what is true, holy, and just, does man become free from the rule of sin and death. And in such obedience, he completes his partnership with God.

CHAPTER XXIII

GOD AS PURPOSE

I

Is there a purpose in history? Different men have answered this question in different ways; Omar Khayyám thought not:

Into this Universe, and *why* not knowing,
Nor *whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays;
Hither and thither moves, and mates and slays
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass
Among the Guests star-scattered on the Grass,
And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot
Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass!¹

On the other hand Tennyson answered—yes!—

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process
of the suns.²

¹ Fitzgerald, "Omar Khayyám."

² Tennyson, "Locksley Hall."

Browning also strikes this note of optimism with great frequency. The conviction that there is an ordered purpose in the world runs through all his work. A characteristic expression is found in the faith of Abt Vogler :

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or
agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing
might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should
be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal
and woe;
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians
know.³

The ancients, however, believed in a golden age in the past. In fact this opinion still persists in large sections of the modern world. The tendency to idealize the good old days, which is exhibited in the literature of every people, indicates that the uncritical crowd has always accepted the idea that the race is in a constant process of degeneration. This is obviously a denial that there is an "increasing purpose" in human life. In the Epic of Rama, Prince of India, we are told that "in the happy days of yore"—

Twice born men were free from passion, lust of gold
and impure greed,
Faithful to their Rites and Scriptures, truthful in their
word and deed.

³ Browning, "Abt Vogler."

Altar blazed in every mansion, from each home was
bounty given,
Stooped no man to fulsome falsehood, questioned none
the will of Heaven.

The story of the Garden of Eden carries the same idea though it condenses the lost, blissful time to narrow dimensions, but as Dean Inge has pointed out, it had little influence upon the thought of the tenaciously optimistic Jewish race. Yet, so deep-seated is this belief in decadence in the consciousness of mankind that many, though professing to believe that the golden age is in the future, join occasionally with their backward-looking neighbors in scolding the youth of their day for deliberate violation of the old ideals.

All the ancients did not share this pessimistic view. Pliny believed that each age surpasses the last in goodness, and Seneca foretold the amazement of posterity at the ignorance of his generation. St. Paul maintained that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." In this sublime affirmation of faith, the apostle rightly interpreted the mind of his Master. Jesus never wavered in his conviction that a better day is always coming. This conviction was what gave him strength to abrogate the Mosaic law and to stand unflinchingly for spiritual religion. His central doctrine of the kingdom of God embraces every subsequent age. He taught his disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom—not for its return. Like leaven in meal, it was to work in the consciousness of mankind until the truth he taught should be unequivocally accepted and universally regulative in morals and manners.

But notwithstanding the simplicity and clarity of the

teaching of Jesus, the church has never been altogether hospitable to the idea of an improving world. Millenarianism continually scans the horizons for signs of degeneration, and the preacher in general is given to painting a dark picture of current morality. The "faith of our fathers" is one of his favorite themes. The saints, upon whose authority he depends for his sanctions and whom he holds up as shining exemplars of nobility in character for the youth of his time, were men who lived in a far distant day. Thus, implicitly if not explicitly the suggestion is kept alive that the world is in a sorry condition and that the best way to set it right would be to return to the discarded methods of an earlier time.

Such was the plan of Rousseau who with Turgot held that civilization had been a gigantic mistake and that the farther man has traveled from a state of primitive simplicity, the more unhappy has his lot become. While Diderot was not ready to go so far, he was also convinced that "there is a limit in civilization, far less distant from the savage state than is imagined." This was partially the idea of Carlyle in "Past and Present." Sensitive to the dislocations caused to the workers by the introduction of machinery with its displacement of the hand craftsman, he suggested a return to the methods of production that existed before Watt, Arkwright, and Stephenson had worked out their revolutionary inventions. The same solution of the maladjustments of industrial society was offered by William Morris and Ruskin, and now we have a striking illustration of the widespread and tenacious hold of this idea upon the human mind in the propaganda of Ghandi who would have his fellow countrymen in India reject the products of machinery.

Belief in an "increasing purpose" has also been seriously attacked and partially undermined from another quarter in our own day. The naïve idea of progress which resulted from the discovery of Darwin has lately been subjected to the fires of criticism. The grip of this belief upon thinkers of a generation ago can scarcely be exaggerated. Herbert Spencer asserted the dogma of progress with an assurance no religionist has ever surpassed in his claims for an impending apocalyptic upheaval: "Progress is not an accident but a necessity. What we call evil and immorality must disappear. It is certain that man must become perfect."

It is difficult now to see where the eminent generalizer secured the data upon which he based his assurance of the perfectibility of man. Certainly he overlooked the fact that evolution works both ways, and that in any event it is not necessarily associated with goodness. But the Great War with its recrudescence of barbarism gave a knockout blow to such complacency. In the recoil, interpreters, after reexamining the data, are asking whether progress is not an illusion. When we recall the austere sexual morality and the rigorous personal and civic integrity that marked the life of the Roman Republic five centuries before Christ and realize how much lower our standards are, it gives our boasting pause. The buoyancy, esthetic development, philosophic insight, and love of truth, which were displayed in the golden days of Greece set a goal that is still far beyond the highest culture of our age. Why is it that with all our vaunted wealth and education and the advantages of our religion, our average level of achievement falls so far below that of the Athens of Pericles and Phidias? It is well for us to raise such questions, for they guard us against the danger of self-

complacency and show that we still have far to go before we can prove that our Christian civilization has surpassed the standard set by those of ancient days whose initial opportunities were so much inferior to ours. Such considerations have pushed no less an authority than Dean Inge to the conclusion that "neither science nor history gives us any warrant for believing that humanity has advanced, except by accumulating knowledge and experience and the instruments of living." ⁴

But there is a still more deadly argument against both purpose and progress of which account must be taken. This is based upon the assumption that the sun is a dying star which will eventually become cold. Then man and all his achievements material and spiritual will be blotted out like a child's figures on the shore when the tide comes in. Mr. Balfour has stated this hypothesis in a passage of singular force and beauty:

Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe, will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. "Imperishable monuments" and "immortal deeds," death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as if they had not been. Nor will anything that is be better or worse for all that the labor, genius, devotion, and suffering of man have striven through countless ages to effect.⁵

More recently Bertrand Russell has turned this conjecture into a dogma. "All the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the noonday brightness of human genius,

⁴ "Outspoken Essays."

⁵ "Foundations of Belief," p. 31.

are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system." Before accepting this conclusion which is the quintessence of negation, the wise man will canvass every other possibility. He will seek to discover the reasons which may be enumerated in support of his instinctive hope that there is a purpose in history. And though it is disquieting to have to face such a blighting opinion as Mr. Russell has declared, it is a good policy to know what the other man thinks, and better still to be able to give reasons for the faith that is in us, and if possible, to refute his errors.

II

Having stated at some length the opinions of others, ancient and modern, let us now consider the problem from the point of view of our immediate experience. If our thought had no continuity, the world at any moment would present a spectacle of disorder. The drifting clouds and fickle winds would appear to be without purpose. The position of the stars in the heavens would be without meaning. But since we have the gift of memory and can unite the impressions of yesterday with those of to-day, it soon becomes evident that in nature there is an order under every appearance of disorder. There is the succession of night and day, the rhythm of the seasons, while the stars move with undeviating precision upon their courses.

To the discerning eye, this order is everywhere apparent. The world is made up of a multitude of different materials, from the granite of the hills, to the lichens that grow upon it. Every species of tree, grass, shrub, and living thing, differs in its composition from every other species. "All flesh is not the same flesh,"

as St. Paul said, for not only is there one kind of flesh of birds, beasts, and fishes, but the different varieties of these differ in themselves. Yet at the basis of every substance, whether it is organic or inorganic, there is a definite number of elemental atoms, and all substances—whether the oyster on the sea floor, the brain of an Edison, the dirt beneath our feet, the clouds around the setting sun, or the remotest of the stars—are made up of these atoms in varying combinations. Some substances are chemically simple, others are complex, but all are composed of one or more elements and their different appearance and texture are due to these varying proportions of which they are made.

Suppose a person who had never heard of writing or printing should see a newspaper for the first time. It would seem to him to be covered with arbitrary marks of no significance. If he was observant, he might notice that these marks keep recurring at various intervals but even at that no order would be evident. Yet for those versed in the art of reading the location of every letter and word would be both simple and rational. By the combination of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet in a wide variety of interchanging relations, they present to the initiated a clear, definite, and perfectly ordered message. Surely it is reasonable to assume that this may also be true of the book of nature and of history. Every musical composition, from the most vulgar jazz to the noblest fugues of Bach, is made up of the same elemental notes from the diatonic and chromatic scales. The difference in effect consists in the difference in their combination.

III

A throng of people is pouring out of a number of vast office buildings at the heart of a great city. How volatile their relations appear to be as they hurry hither and yon when their day's work is done! There seems to be no order or reason in their movements. They go in as many directions as are possible. Each is bent on a different mission from all the others. Yet practically every one has a definite goal. Most of them are going home to wife, mother, or child. Underneath the disorder there is order. Every man has a motive and however confusing his actions may appear on first consideration they readily yield to analysis and can be resolved into simple terms.

Such a scene is a cross-section of history. Below the welter and turmoil of clashing races, wars, cultural and social advances and retrogressions, the eye of faith can see the outworking of a consistent principle. Our chief limitation is the narrowness of our time. An entire human life is no more than the tick of a watch against the background of the age of the earth.

This shows how unconvincing it is to cry out hysterically against the decadence of our generation. It is as though we should yield to alarm and think the ocean was drying up on seeing the tide begin to go out. Man, it is true, has moved very slowly toward his goal—his highest well-being. He has often climbed to heights only to fall and be submerged again in the common ruck. Ancient empires have been deleted leaving scarce a memory behind. The sands of the desert have drifted for ages over once flourishing civilizations. The tangled growth of tropical jungles has buried beautiful

monuments reared by the patient hands of vanished but accomplished peoples.

Even more disturbing to the believer in an "increasing purpose" is the fate of Greece concerning whose worth there can be no doubt. Here civilization reached its apogee. Never before nor since has there been so vivid a sense of beauty coupled with balance and restraint, depth of spiritual insight, and intellectual interest and integrity. But Greece collapsed in ruin. It seems too colossally sad to be true that Homer, Phidias, Pericles, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Herodotus could not build an enduring civilization, and that their ideas should be buried under the ruins of forgotten centuries.

Yet this is not all the story. Many centuries after the star of Greece had set, her sense of beauty, her clarity of thought, and love of truth for its own sake, again issued in the Renaissance and have been bearing fruit ever since. Does this not suggest that Greece died to live again in a wider theater of action? This is also true of Egypt and Rome and preëminently of Israel. The stern convictions of Israel's people, the ideals of her prophets, and the self-sacrifice of her spiritual heroes, have shaped the soul of the western world. Though Israel is dead, she lives in immeasurably greater strength than when she was living her precarious life in constant danger from the surrounding empires who looked with contempt upon their humble neighbor. Because her ideals were spiritual, and theirs were material, she exercises an almost universal sway over the thoughts of men, while most of her great neighbors have faded into a shadowy memory.

From such reflections which could be extended indefinitely, it is reasonable to assume that there is a pur-

pose in the march of human events. Often this purpose is not evident until long after when time furnishes the essential perspective. Certainly it is easier to believe that a controlling hand guided the Pilgrims across the sea and inspired them to clear the ground and lay the foundations of their commonwealth in the new world, than to rest in the unsatisfying opinion that they were moved by caprice and guided by chance. Centuries from now when the historian looks back to the tragic upheaval in Russia he will see the reason for it, and realize that the cost though vast was not out of proportion to the benefits ultimately derived, which are far beyond our horizons now.

This must not be construed as a plea for the easy-going optimism of Browning's Pippa—"God's in his heaven, all's right with the world." What has been said is not an argument in support of the idea that everything which is is for the best. Without doubt man has made many a blunder, vast in evil consequence. But these mistakes do not mean that God has withdrawn from the control of human affairs. He is the senior partner still whose holdings far outweigh the holdings of all the other members of the company. Yet he requires those who are working with him to accept a certain degree of responsibility, even though he knows that they will often bring disaster upon themselves. This is the price of liberty. Man has to work out his own salvation. But beyond all the shadows and the errors, God keeps "watch above his own" and guards his children against irretrievable disaster.

IV

When history is viewed in this light, the outline of a definite purpose emerges through its mists. Greece fell not only to live again but also because the superstructure of her civilization rested on a foundation of slavery. She was not ready for permanency of tenure of so exalted an estate. Perhaps that is always the way. Excellence has to yield place to imperfection that a wider excellence may come. The alabaster box of precious achievement must be broken that its life-giving fragrance may be diffused over more extended areas. It is well that the genius cannot transmit his superior powers to his offspring else mankind would soon be divided into supermen and slaves. Proud nations decay if they get too far beyond the common level. This accounts for the ups and downs of history. The divine purpose embraces all mankind, and is focused upon the common weal. Our perplexities are largely due to the restriction of our attention to the narrow segment in which we believe our interests to lie. But the balance must be kept true, for ultimately a disturbance in China will have its reflex among every other people.

To interpret the course of human events, as originating in any other matrix than the divine mind and purpose, is to rest upon what is irrational and capricious. This would make man the plaything of ironic chance; it is equivalent to the assertion that, when the time comes for the earth to be struck by a wandering star or when through the death of the sun it becomes as cold as the moon, neither man nor his achievement will be even a memory.

Any explanation of life that sees neither plan nor purpose in man's long upward climb is too credulous

to satisfy the simplest demands of intelligence. The sense of duty, love, and conscience, which comes after ages of development through an apparently interminable past, requires a more adequate cause than chance. Man with all his wonderful achievements stands at the end of a tenuous line of life which reaches back to the Cambrian days. There were a million reasons why that line should have been severed, but it did not fail to carry its precious freight. As Professor J. Y. Simpson has said: "In face of the thousands of progressive distinct modifications that led to the estate of man, what were the chances of such a process working out correctly if it were not guided, if there had not been this end in view? They are infinity to one."⁶ The only adequate and satisfying explanation of the universe, man, and man's history, is the guiding hand of God.

Nor is this a mere dogmatic conclusion of the religionist whose will to believe is too strong to allow him to consider the evidence in favor of the opposite position. No one would accuse Frederic Harrison of a bias in favor of the traditional interpretation of life. Yet surely belief in a purpose underlying the sweep of history is explicit in the following statement:

Let this be our test of what is history and what is not, that it teaches us something of the advance of human progress, that it tells us of some of those mighty spirits who have left their mark on all time, that it shows us the nations of the earth, woven together in one purpose, or is lit up with those great ideas of those great purposes which have kindled the conscience of mankind.⁷

⁶ "The Spiritual Interpretation of Nature," p. 317.

⁷ Frederic Harrison, "The Meaning of History," p. 11.

It is a modern fashion to deride the belief in a design governing the whole structure of the universe in general and of history in particular. Paley's argument went too far and in the light of recent biological discovery and research has become so grotesque as to induce all kinds of caricature which tend to destroy belief in design altogether. Yet no less an authority than Lord Kelvin said in his presidential address to the British Association in Edinburgh: "I feel profoundly convinced that the argument from design has been greatly too much lost sight of in recent zoölogical speculations. But overpoweringly strong proofs of intelligent and benevolent design lie all around us, and if ever perplexities, whether metaphysic or scientific, turn us from them for a time, they come back upon us with irresistible force, showing us through Nature the influence of a free-will, and teaching us that all living things depend on one ever-acting Creator and Ruler." ⁸

V

These considerations are general in character but they have a definite bearing upon the welfare of the individual soul. With God there is neither near nor far, great nor small. The telescope and microscope are both alike to him. If he has a purpose in the universe, every man is a part of that purpose and its course can be traced in his life. Sometimes, amid the storm and stress of what look like capricious tides of circumstance, men wonder whether they are not mere driftwood buffeted about by contrary winds of destiny, to be driven at last as débris upon the shores of time. Their range of choice seems pitifully narrow.

⁸ Quoted by Bowran, "Christianity and Culture," p. 60.

They have no certainty for the future. Often they have to walk in pain and sorrow. Their fondest hopes are never realized. They are forced to a continuous readjustment of their aims to lower levels. Though they started out to gain distinction, they have to content themselves with mediocrity. Often they have the humiliation of seeing their competitors of lesser capacity and worth snatch away the prizes that by right are theirs. In such conditions it looks as though life has nothing better to offer than humiliation and defeat.

This unhealthy conclusion, however, appears to be most unlikely when we recall the infinite patience and care that have gone into the making of man. It is unreasonable to believe that God would direct all the processes which have been coördinated through long ages to bring him to the point where his soul is filled with longings that only eternity can satisfy, merely to thwart and mock him. If he were only a physical being, why should he be dissatisfied with physical conditions?

How then can we explain the sorrows and disappointments which at times cloud his spirit and blot out his hopes? They are a part of the divine process by which he is fitted for larger tasks. Often man does not know what is best for himself. His emotions are mercurial and he accepts a dark view of things too readily. Once, while he was still young, Lincoln applied for a position in the civil service at Washington. He was bitterly disappointed in his failure to secure it. Doubtless in after years he saw that the appointment would have been a calamity. He would have settled down in a narrow routine and in a short time would have been afraid to leave his comparative security for

any field where initiative and daring were necessary. The appointment would have cost him his place in history.

Behind many of our discouragements there lies the same divine purpose. If our plans never miscarried, we might perhaps be more satisfied than we are, but we should assuredly be lacking in sympathy for those who have failed and in experience of spiritual values. As thoughtful men look back across the years and try to visualize their journey through time, most of them are conscious of a destiny that shaped their lives, though they were rarely aware of guidance even in their most critical moments. It is in the light of after years that we can see that we were directed into our choices. Thus God is working his purpose out in history and in the individual lives of men. A vivid realization that in the vast ensemble he has a part for each man to play should prove a strong incentive to the best effort we can put forth. One thing is certain: the man who is convinced that God's purpose includes *him* will live more nobly and achieve a higher place in the heavenly commonwealth than his neighbor who has no such conviction.

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